



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

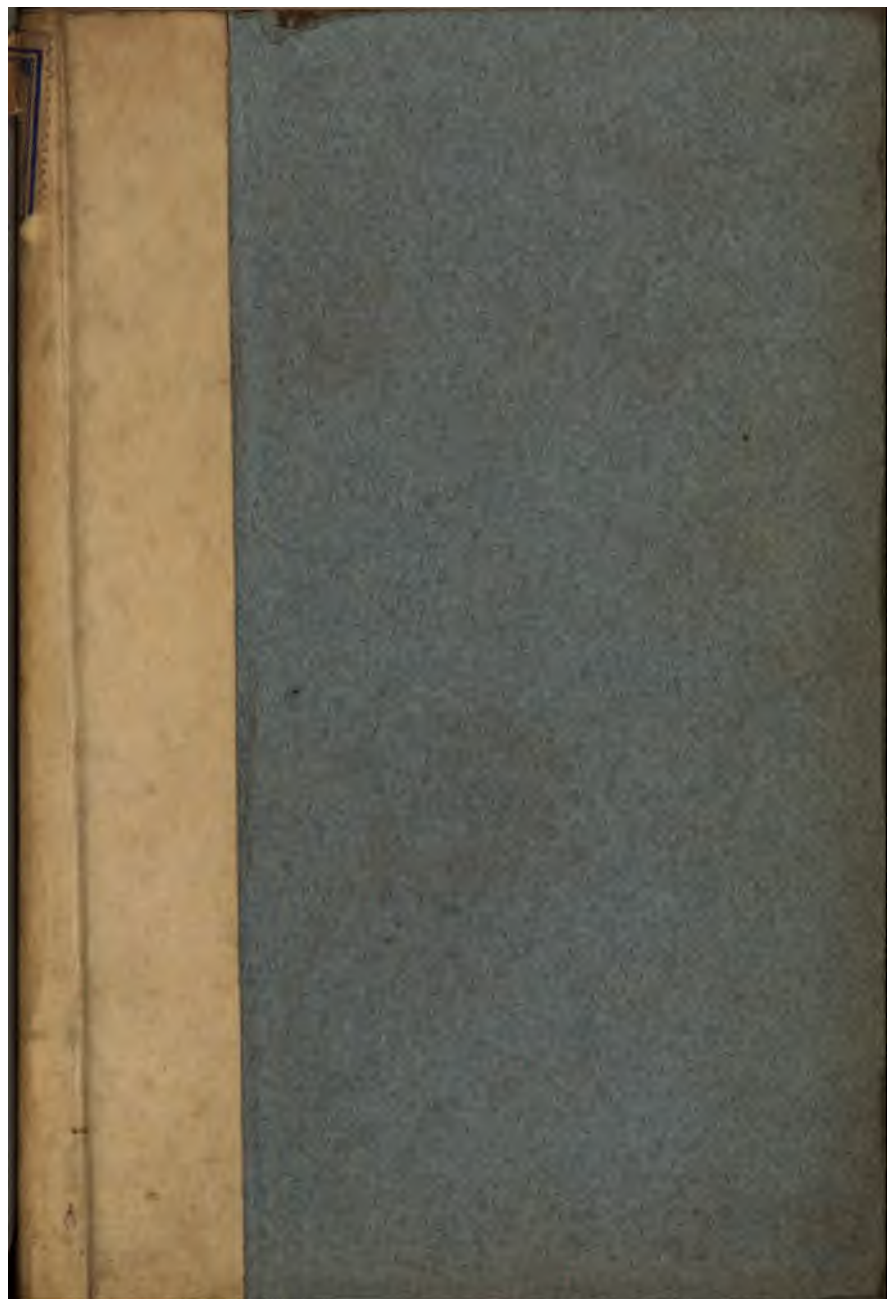
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





600070004H





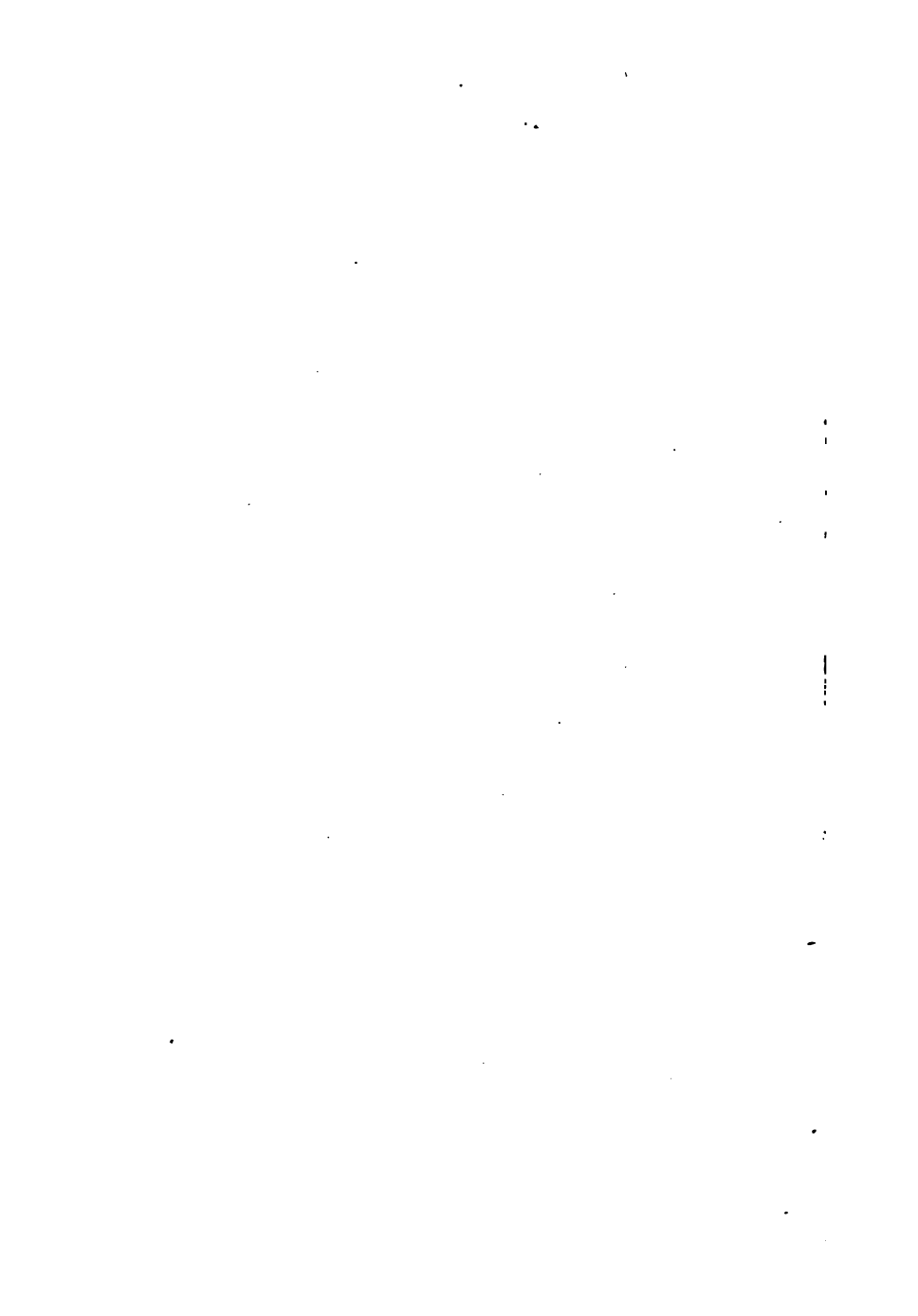


371.

Post Mortem



PRICE ONE SHILLING



P O S T M O R T E M

POST MORTEM



WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXXI

251. 2. 231



P O S T M O R T E M.



I.

ON the 5th of June 1759 (new style), having been confined to my bed for just twelve days, I gathered from certain whispers which it was supposed I was unable to hear, and from certain glances of curiosity or commiseration which it was supposed I was unable to see, that my condition was deemed hopeless, and that I was to die.

It cannot be denied that there are occasions when a man, ordinarily brave, may not improperly feel fear. But it is the fashion to believe, or to pretend, that neither brave nor virtuous men fear Death. For myself, however, I can only state, that although I possessed personal courage which

even my enemies respected, and a share of virtue which even my friends did not exaggerate, yet, when I heard the first muttering of the grim summons, the sensation which chiefly occupied my breast was that of Terror. I was seized every now and then with faintness ; and at these times I endeavoured to imagine that I had met my end, and that I had nothing further to dread. But as each seizure passed away, leaving me still feebly breathing, I returned to the consciousness of my situation, and to the fearful anticipations which I could not overcome. But it is necessary that I should explain the exact direction which my fear took. In plain words, it was the horror of annihilation which beset me. A certain circumstance connected with an adventure which had befallen me a few years before, greatly contributed to my present disquiet. Travelling in company with an Irish gentleman, we had been attacked by a party of highwaymen ; and just as I passed my sword through the body of one of their number, he had knocked me *senseless*. Senseless ! and what does a man who is senseless feel ? What had I felt ? Nothing. For more

than ten minutes all had been a blank. And with this scene of the past in my mind, I began to reason—might not that blow, which for ten minutes deprived me of my senses, have deprived me of life altogether? The dread of annihilation was now thick upon me. At last, however, my attention was diverted by words of hope and consolation which some one was reading aloud at my bedside. My interest became absorbed, and when the voice of the reader ceased to speak, I myself began to fortify my mind with such Scriptural passages referring to a blessed future, as in my extremity I could recollect. I experienced a most comfortable relief, and the phantom annihilation left my visions. Presently my mind began to dwell not only upon happiness which was to come, but upon happiness which I was actually enjoying. I saw long-forgotten forms—playmates, schoolfellows, companions of my youth and of my old age—who one and all smiled on me. They did not smile with any compassion,—that I no longer felt that I needed,—but with that sort of kindness which is exchanged by people who are equally happy. I saw my mother, father, and

sisters, all of whom I had survived. They did not speak, yet they communicated to me their unaltered and unalterable affection. At about the time when they appeared I made an effort to realise my bodily situation—that is, I endeavoured to connect my soul with the body which lay on the bed in my house. The endeavour failed: I was dead.

II.

Part of the great enigma was now solved. The most elementary doctrine contained in the faith which I had held was justified. My better judgment had always told me that the soul was immortal; but that did not greatly diminish my joy and gratitude when I knew, finally, and beyond further doubt or question, that the promptings both of my heart and of my reason had all along held the true direction. The hope, which had sometimes smouldered, but which had never been extinguished, now blazed into conviction. I had never perished; there was something in me which never could perish. Contrast my triumphant

gratitude on learning by experience that annihilation had no existence, with the deep thankfulness we have so often heard expressed by those who have narrowly escaped being taught the same lesson! Why does even a good man exult when he is permitted to cling a little longer to a life which he knows to be full of misery and care; and when the life which, by his professed faith, he confesses to be one of inestimable happiness for him, is held a little further from his reach? Is it because he doubts the degree of mercy that may be extended to him? or is it because he is such a weak creature as to prefer a life of discomfort clearly defined to a life of felicity which he cannot exactly comprehend?

But my business is to reveal, not to speculate. Therefore I will proceed, without further delay, to the recital of my strange and wonderful adventures. First, it is necessary for me to explain the state of existence into which I had now passed. One method of doing this would be to write some pages of scientific description; but I prefer a more simple plan. Imagine, then, *sleep accompanied by dreams*, and you will have as proper a

conception of my condition as any which it might be in my power to give you. Bear in mind, therefore, that when I shall talk of "seeing," my meaning will be that I saw as a man sees when he is dreaming. Of my "speaking," "hearing," "touching," or "being touched," the same. As to locality, the places through which I roamed, or was carried, at first seemed to have no boundaries; but I shall show in due course that I gradually became aware of the existence of certain fixed regions and districts. As to time, that was only relatively infinite, and what the world would have called more than a century was to me a space of about one month. At the first outset of my career in the strange country to which I had been translated, I found myself in a gallery, pretty wide, and, as far as I could tell, interminably long. Having looked about me, I at first thought that I recognised the place as being one called "the Armoury," in my own house. But though there was some armour hanging on these walls, I soon noticed that it was of a very poor description,—new, like that with which a merchant who had lately made a fortune might have surrounded

himself, and quite unlike my own. Also I saw that, besides the armour, many other things of a very different nature were hung up there, such as fruit, children's toys, and a number of wigs. I began to examine some of the wigs more closely, and then made the discovery that they were, in fact, not wigs at all, but a kind of lichen which grew out of the walls. In the world, had I been exposed to such perplexity, I should have certainly believed that I was either mad or bewitched ; but here, I was troubled with no such fears, and did not even feel any curiosity as to the cause of the phenomenon before me. I proceeded to walk along the gallery, and the objects on the wall presented all the time such sudden and amazing varieties as I am sure no human being could ever devise. After traversing a distance of, I should say, half a mile, I came to a part of the gallery where a billiard-table stood. Seeing that the table had been lately used, I expected every moment to see some of those who had been playing. After waiting in vain for some length of time, I took up one of the balls which lay on the table, and

rolled it. Hereupon the billiard-table appeared to be no more ; or rather, when I rolled the ball, it ran down the length of that portion of the gallery through which I had passed, and which now seemed to be one long billiard-table itself. After this, and by what process I cannot say, I found myself standing on a quay, by the side of a great river. I had, to my knowledge at least, gone through no doorway or other opening, and I looked round endeavouring to discover how or whence I had reached the spot where I was standing. I could make out nothing to the purpose, and I directed my attention to the numerous ships moored before me. I was surprised and disappointed to see no signs of any other being like myself, either on board the numerous craft or in the streets leading to the quay. But I presently heard a drum, and, turning round, beheld a company of French soldiers marching. They carried their matches lighted ; they were all talking, and making a great deal of gesture, and appeared to be starting for immediate battle. Feeling a strong desire to accompany them, I joined their ranks and walked along with

them. Many of them were fine men, and in most respects well formed; but I soon perceived that every one of them had some kind of bodily deformity. The forehead of one was so monstrous that he could hardly keep his hat, which seemed to have been made of an ordinary size, upon his head. The right arm of another was longer by several inches than its fellow. A third had a great swelling in his hips; and the shoulders of a fourth were so rounded that they almost met together in front of his chest. I tried to follow their conversation; but all I could plainly hear was the name "De Bougainville," which they often repeated, and which seemed to encourage them. I began to grow weary of my companions, and to lose the interest I had felt as to their enterprise. Meantime it had become night. I was hurried forward at an increased pace, but by degrees I dropped behind, and at last found that only one soldier remained, marching by my side. The suspicion then came into my mind that he was leading me into some great danger, and that he had that evil design; and I occasionally sat down as if to rest, and he went on alone. Each time

that we did this, he proceeded a little distance and then turned round, beckoning me to follow. I obeyed him three or four times; but at length it became too dark for me to see him, and thinking myself well rid of him, I began to retrace my steps towards the quay—still hoping, however, that I might somehow regain the gallery, which, in default of any fixed abode, I regarded as a sort of home. As I wandered along, I came upon some buildings, apparently unfinished, which I took to be a row of handsome houses in course of construction. I entered one house by a doorway which had not yet been supplied with a door, and was surprised to find myself at once in a very decently furnished room. Here I waited, I suppose anticipating some further adventures, though certainly not of the kind which befell me. A sensation of overpowering fear came over me. My hair seemed to be lifted on end, and my knees to shake. Looking suddenly round, I beheld the cause of this disturbance.

III.

A woman, clothed in red, stood close to me, and as I turned round she clutched me by the arm, and looked up into my face with a peculiar smile. Her figure was slight and comely, her feet extremely small, and her hands very small, white, and graceful; her features were handsome, and yet her face was plainly stamped with depravity, hatred, cunning, and cruelty. Even in my lifetime, a beautiful face that was also a bad face had ever repelled me,—though there are many men, I know, whom such faces only allure all the more by such an unnatural combination; but now, the appearance of this scarlet woman, as I called her, filled me with an extraordinary loathing. This feeling, however, did not master the fear which continued to paralyse me. Indignation at length released me from the spell. The scarlet woman suddenly pinched my arm with savage force, and demanded, "Will you be mine?" "Madam!" was all that I contrived to say; upon which she asked me, "Pray, whom do you love, Mr Coke?" This question, instead of

causing me to make a suitable reply, set me thinking of the past. I conjured up the form of a heartless fair one to whom I had once vainly paid my addresses, and I became lost in sad but sweet reflection. The scarlet woman recalled me to the present by giving me a horrible dig in the side with two of her fingers, exclaiming as she did so, "Bah, you old milksop!" This exasperated me to the last degree, and believing that she was a demon (as indeed she was), I resolved to pay no respect to her sex, but rid myself of her presence by whatever means might be necessary. "Leave me, you she-devil!" I shouted. But here she burst out laughing, and her beauty, such as it was, and her good-nature—such it appeared at the moment—softened my wrath, and made me feel rather ashamed of myself. Still laughing, she then begged me, in a very sweet voice, to drink a cup of wine which she handed to me. But an inward warning came to me just then, telling me that the wine was poison, and the scarlet woman before all other things a poisoner. So I declined her solicitation; and then, seeing that she appeared confused, I whispered in her

ear, "You intended to poison me," whereupon she flung herself into my arms, weeping bitterly. How I received her transports, I hardly know ; but soon afterwards she was leading me by the hand through some other rooms in the house. Having reached a small hall, or chamber, at the end of a corridor, we came to a halt, and my conductress desired me to listen at a door which was before us. I obeyed her, and then, to my horror, became aware that two or three men were in the room to which the door led, shrieking and groaning in the convulsions of death by poison. I turned to upbraid the scarlet woman, but she had disappeared.


I now resolved to go to the aid of the unhappy wretches whose cries still horrified me. When I had entered the room, however, no more sounds were to be heard, and no creature was to be seen. This room opened into another, and that one into a third, and fourth, and I passed through them all without at first seeing anything of the kind that I had expected to see. But after remaining for some time in the fourth room, my attention was turned to a bed which stood in one corner,

shrouded by white dimity curtains. I was soon convinced that some one was concealed next the wall on the farther side of this bed, and drawing my sword, I pulled aside the curtains and stood on the defensive. I then perceived a man of an ashy-pale countenance kneeling on the floor by the wall, his eyes fixed upon a small crucifix that he held. He wore a light-coloured suit, a good deal embroidered with silver lace, and had a kind of jockey's cap on his head. I noticed, too, that he had a sort of goitre, which gave him a most uncomfortable appearance. On being disturbed, he turned his white face full upon me, and in deep, hollow tones uttered the following words:—

“ In doubt I lived, in doubt I die,
Yet stand prepared the vast abyss to try,
And undismayed expect eternity.”

Then, having savagely glared at me, he exclaimed, “Dog! why do you seek me?” I was about to make a fierce retort, when I heard the sound of several persons approaching from the next room. I turned and saw a crowd of men, armed with various weapons, coming towards us.

One man, covered with blood, led the rest, and kept shouting, "This way; he is hidden outside the window." Upon this, curious to relate, I became possessed with the delusion that I was a criminal for whom these persons were searching, and without any hesitation I leapt behind the bed, where the other man was still kneeling, and crouched down by his side. There I lay for some time, and heard the armed party come in and open the windows, from which, it seemed, they expected to see the object of their search. My companion behind the bed presently whispered, "Would you betray me? I am Lord Ferrers." Having often heard the eccentric character which this nobleman bore, and being still mindful of the affront I had lately received from him, I observed, "Then, perhaps your lordship is not accountable for your actions?" Whereupon he said, in an earnest, hissing whisper, "Tell them so. Oh, go out and tell them so!" How I answered him I cannot recall, but at about that time I noticed that the space behind the bed was very much more extensive than I had supposed. I heard, and presently saw, several horses,



vehicles, and passengers not far off, and—how, I cannot say—I was next in a street full of people and traffic. I joined the throng, and put on an unconcerned air, with the idea of escaping notice, for I still fancied myself a criminal. As I was proceeding thus, to my great joy I fell in with an old and tried friend—a squire from my part of Lincolnshire, whose name was Armstrong. I had in life commenced an extraordinary friendship with Armstrong—a friendship prematurely closed by his falling in a duel at an early period in his career. Nevertheless, previous to this violent parting, he had performed more than one valuable service for me, and I had been in the habit of calling him, in a jesting manner, my “good genius.” Directly Armstrong recognised me, he came forward, and, shaking my hand, though not quite so heartily as I might have expected, said, “Well, Hal; what are you doing in this cursed hole?” I was not only overjoyed to meet him, but his words, though carelessly and coldly uttered, led me to hope that I now had some one with whom I could talk openly upon the many matters which occupied my mind, and more es-

pecially, as to the state of tormenting perplexity in which my lot seemed to be cast. He, as if he knew and shared my desire, proposed that we should go into a neighbouring coffee-house, "where, if necessary," said he, "we can have some conversation together." But no sooner had we passed through a door which he pushed open, than we stood on the margin of a vast lake. Armstrong signed to me to enter a boat which lay by us, and then, with a mournful smile, he left me.

IV.

Taking my seat in the boat, as Armstrong had seemed to direct, I commenced to ply a pair of oars which I found ready dipped in the water. This would have appeared a laborious task, for the boat or bark was of considerable size, and would have held fifty men; but I felt no fatigue, although the water did to a certain degree resist my strokes. It was not until I had rowed some distance that I began to wonder what I was about. On no side were any signs of habitation visible. To my right hand the lake seemed no

longer to have any boundary ; to my left I could see nothing but a low marshy waste. As to whither I was going, I could just distinguish ahead of me a few rocks partly enveloped in mist ; and as to whence I had come, it appeared as if I had quitted nothing more than some great banks of mud. So I very naturally came to a pause, in order to consider what to do, or how to proceed ; and as I was thus engaged, I heard a faint shout to my left. I then saw the figures of two men. One of them was Armstrong, and the other I thought bore a great resemblance to myself, but I could not discern his features. Armstrong waved his hand, as if encouraging me to go on. I shouted in return, and once more plied my oars. Armstrong and the man with him then became wrapped in a thick vapour which rose from the surrounding swamp, and I could see them no more.

I have hitherto said very little as to the appearance of the sky. I stated that, almost at the commencement of my adventures, it became dark ; but I may as well add that, when I entered the house in which were the scarlet woman

and Lord Ferrers, it appeared to be day-time; that when I met Armstrong in the streets it was dusk; and that when he had led me to the bark on the lake it was a little lighter—about as light as it is just before sunrise. Now, however, when, having lost sight of Armstrong and his friend, I pursued my course, and turned my face upwards to observe the firmament, not a cloud was to be seen, nor any blue sky. Everything around me, except the land and the water, was the colour of milk. At the same time my oars ceased to meet with any resistance, and my bark seemed to be cleaving her passage through air. Other miraculous changes soon took place. The waters began to resemble nothing else than a sea the colour of turquoise, yet pellucid, and not monotonous in effect. Huge creatures, apparently a kind of gold-fish, though some of them looked as if they would have weighed twenty pounds, gambolled on every side of me. Presently all land disappeared from my view; the milky veil which overspread the heavens gradually melted away, and disclosed a sky which seemed to borrow its colour from the water underneath. Although I

could see no more, a marvellously bright-yellow light lit up the scene ; and, what pleased me most of all, a subdued melody of birds broke the silence which had been reigning. After I had enjoyed these beauties for some time, the yellow light seemed to concentrate in a tract of rippling gold at one particular spot. To this spot I directed my bark, and soon beheld rising, as it were, out of the lake in that direction, a single majestic column. Then I distinguished a second, and then a third ; and I soon perceived that they stood on land, and not, as might have appeared, in the water or sky. My bark now made very swift progress, and soon grazed the margin of a smooth meadow, which sloped most gracefully down into the lake. I leapt on to the shore and walked towards the columns, which I now saw were of marble, and seven in number, forming, with a few steps of the same material, all that remained of a ruined temple. These ruins were on the summit of the bank which led down to the water ; and to that summit I began slowly, but without any difficulty, to ascend. Although I could not say what lay beyond, yet the scene

which I did contemplate was beautiful beyond expression. My happiness was nearly perfect, and I was speedily granted all that remained to make it complete; for as I was ascending the gentle slope, little Alice, my sister, attended by her favourite dog Rover, came running to meet me, and, after the most affectionate greeting possible, led me to the top of the bank, and then to a terrace on the other side, where I beheld my honoured old parents. They were sitting together, and their faces, as well as that of little Alice, wore such a look of contentment as no human being has ever seen. I embraced them all three a great number of times, and they hung upon my neck as though we were never again to be separated; while old Rover, his mouth distended with an honest dog's grin, kept wagging his tail and leaping into the air, as if he understood happiness as well as any one else. As soon as the first cravings of our ecstasy had been satisfied, we all sat down, forming a little circle on the grass, and became engaged in long and most truly delightful conversation. All curiosity as to the land of perplexity which I had just left,

all longing for explanation and enlightenment, had now disappeared from my breast. I could recall not a single care of the past, I could not trouble myself as to the future; I thought only of the present, except when my dearest relations reminded me, as they spoke, of various good deeds which I had done, had thought forgotten, and had myself forgotten; and when I returned their innocent compliments by recalling to them various things to their credit.

The prospect before us, as we sat together thus engaged, was exactly suited to our happy frames of mind. For hundreds of miles there lay an expanse of country more beautiful than anything that poet or painter ever succeeded in conceiving. From the eminence where we had placed ourselves, broad terraces, sparkling with numberless flowers, gradually descended to the plains beneath. These plains appeared luxurious in the chief productions of the earth; and I saw not only wheat, barley, and oats in great abundance, but vast fields of sugar-cane, scarlet chilli, cotton-plant, and poppies of various shades, all scattered in the richest profusion. Mighty oaks, elms,

beeches, and chestnut-trees stood side by side with the date-palm, the mangosteen, the graceful orange-tree, and the gigantic peple. The glorious beauty of the scene was greatly enhanced by the presence of several lakes and rivulets, near which were generally to be seen temples, dismantled yet august, like the one close to us which I had first beheld. I now perceived that a few clouds had risen in the far distance. These clouds the predominant yellow light began to tinge with marvellous effect. In one spot I saw formed a canopy of brilliant gold; in another, all the hues of the opal were collected. At the same time that my attention was attracted by these new beauties, my father, mother, and sister prostrated themselves on the ground, and in a few moments a host of many thousand beings rose from what I called the horizon, and, rapidly ascending, became hidden in the banks of cloud. I waited until my father had risen, and then asked him to explain what I had seen. He smiled, and walked a little aside. I followed him, and he then moved still a little further off. Supposing he wished to speak to me in private, I then went of my own

accord to a little low ground near the shore of the lake, and there my father joined me. But my thoughts were now strangely centred on finding some place of strict concealment. I no longer spoke, but wandered along the water-side, looking for a hiding-place. I presently perceived a small hut, and I went into it. My father, who had kept pretty close to me, also came in, and I then felt an overpowering desire to sleep. Seeing a bed ready prepared, I commenced undressing myself, and my father assisted me. But I had only taken off my shoes and my coat when fatigue overcame me. I threw myself upon the bed as I was. My father took his seat on a chair at my side; but I tried not to notice him, for I somehow had an idea that he wished to escape; and at last, having kept my face averted from the chair for a few moments, I looked at it again, and it was empty. But I was not exactly alone. Standing at the foot of the bed, regarding me with a frown, was the exact counterfeit of myself. The same sort of horrid dread which the first appearance of the scarlet woman had occasioned me, now again held the mastery over me. I lost

whatever degree of consciousness I had hitherto possessed, and for some length of time, for all that I knew, I might have indeed been annihilated.

V.


When the trance, or state of oblivion, into which I had fallen, came to an end, I found myself again in that region of chaos and torment which I had vainly hoped was no more to be my portion. I was in the street where I had first encountered Armstrong; and feeling that he was my only friend, I began to look for him in every direction. In the course of my search I saw many things which shocked, mortified, deluded, or otherwise troubled my spirit. I saw, as before, many persons disfigured by deformities; and of these the most prevalent was the deformity I had noticed in Lord Ferrers, a kind of wen in the throat. As it is not my business or design to perplex, I will here explain, from information which I received only a short time ago, what these deformities signified. They were visible, then, only on those beings who had come to a

violent end in the world. For example, a man who had been killed by a bullet would display a protuberance in the region of his chest, or his forehead, or in whatever part had received the mortal wound ; and all those who had been hanged or beheaded—and they were very numerous—exhibited a sort of tumour about the neck. Armstrong, who had been shot in a duel, had a lump somewhere on his body, but he wore a cloak which concealed it. The most horrible illustration of this strange law I saw in the appearance of a woman who had been burnt for coining, for she was swollen and blistered from head to foot in a very hideous manner. At the time which I am describing, however, I knew nothing of all this, and only saw the result of what I have here been able to explain ; still, I gradually became used to all sorts of fantastic spectacles, and began to reckon personal deformities as nothing unusual. Another peculiarity to which I had to grow accustomed was the great plainness of garb which prevailed ; for though I saw now and then persons very handsomely attired, and even sometimes cavaliers and gallants

of a past age, the majority of those I met wore very little finery. Some men, who were evidently persons of the first importance, had no badges whatever to indicate their rank; and one, whom I heard spoken to as "your grace," was dressed with such an affectation of simplicity, that I set him down for a Quaker. As I wandered along, where I cannot tell, observing the crowd, I came to a great flight of stone steps, and I was about to descend them in the ordinary fashion, when I was suddenly caught up, and, after a pretty long interval, during which I trod nothing but air, I found myself once more standing upon ground. Looking back, and then up into the air, I saw that the street in which I had been walking was nearly a mile overhead behind me. I had alighted on a kind of stage or landing-place; and seeing more steps in front of me, without any ulterior design I began to walk down them, and this time I was not caught up as before, and I went on walking for, I should think, at least a league. Then I reached another stage or platform, which I found was on the brink of a profound chasm. The mouth of the chasm was defended by strong iron

railings. Leaning upon this balustrade, I took a fearful glance at the depths beneath. I became seized with the fancy that this was the bottomless pit, and turning away, I was about to retreat ; but as I did so, a clear but deep bass voice, such as mortal man never heard, commanded me to stand where I was. The voice, though not very loud, seemed to proceed from a throat of metal ; and having first ordered me to pause, uttered, just in my ear, a tirade of appalling abuse—a string of the vilest and most savage reproaches, abounding in words inconceivably blasphemous and foul. At the same time, my neck was encircled by a long and hairy arm, which almost choked me ; and finger-nails, which felt like little spades of iron, were driven into my face and head. Although I was actually in a frenzy of horrible dread, I determined to defend myself to the best of my ability. But first I had to see my assailant ; for though I was being incessantly pummelled, scratched, and kicked, I could at present behold nothing but a part of the hairy arm, which kept its powerful grasp like a vice. So I tried with all my might to turn round. But it was in

vain ; and I was soon forced against the balustrade, and I expected every moment to be dashed into the pit. It was useless to seek for my sword, for that had been taken from me at the first moment of the onset, and hurled over the balustrade into the chasm. What hope had I? In my despair I murmured a faint and most imperfect prayer to heaven. I had no sooner begun to do this than the iron grasp released my neck, and my enemy stood before me. He was of about my own height—that is, very tall—but built in proportions of most horrid strength. He seemed nearly sixty years of age ; but as to that, I can speak with no certainty, for his face was the colour of a flint, and his wrinkles were smoothed out in a hideous, unnatural manner. His head was rather bald and grey, but on his cheeks and chin he had patches of brown hair. His nose was long, thin, and hooked, and when he grinned I could see the bone of the nose through the skin. His eyes were of different colours—one brown, the other grey, and so bloodshot that no white was to be seen at all. Out of his forehead grew something resembling a fossil-stone, which curled



for about three inches, like a horn. Foam stood on his lips as he gnashed together the few green stumps which served him for teeth. His dress was that of a Spanish buccaneer of the olden time, but ragged and dirty. As soon as I confronted this horrid creature, I perceived at once that he was trembling with fear even more than with fury ; and thinking that I knew the cause, I began to pour forth in a louder tone my appeal for heavenly aid, and he presently sank to the ground, and lay there writhing. I then set my foot on his body, and exerted my strength to trample the life out of him. But he, of his own accord, wriggled and crawled to the edge of the pit, and in spite of my efforts to save him for my own mode of punishment, hurled himself, with a wild scream, into the abyss. I looked over the balustrade in order to witness his destruction, but his form disappeared headlong in darkness which my sight could not penetrate.

I now turned aside, and, falling on my knees, returned thanks for my merciful and miraculous escape. I then began to seek the means for returning to a place of comparative safety. I could

no more see any steps like those I had descended ; but as I stood in doubt how to proceed, to my delight and renewed thankfulness I beheld Armstrong. He stood on the edge of a small path in the rock about twenty feet above me, and, smiling pleasantly, he called out in a loud, cheerful tone, which was most welcome, "Well, Hal, so you don't seem to relish the devil's company!"

"For God's sake help me, Jack!" answered I.

"Help you!" he repeated—"most certainly I will." And he threw me one end of a stout rope, by which assistance I soon stood at his side. Hugging him in my arms, I cried out—

"And now, dear Jack, talk to me as you used to talk ; stay with me ; and oh, do not change your form, or slip away by witchcraft, as you did before!"

"Faith!" said he, "I thought you slipped away from me. And pray, did you not see your old mother and father and your little sister?"

"Oh yes," answered I. "I saw them for a little space of time, as in a blessed vision ; but we never spoke, or thought of speaking, of what I am bursting—yes, bursting to hear."

"And what are you bursting to hear, Hal?" asked Armstrong, laughing.

"To hear!" I exclaimed. "Why, to hear from reasonable and reasoning lips where I am; what world I am cast in; wherefore and for what purpose; whether for ever, or for how long; and under what direction—divine or infernal. You can tell me all this, and everything else. But oh, do not lose an instant! I shall be frantic with despair unless you seize this precious moment."

The face of Armstrong now wore a very serious expression, and he said, "You are right. The time is precious, and I have no more control over it than you have. Let us sit down here."

We sat down. I held his arm firmly, and kept my eyes fixed on his. He then spoke in solemn and convincing words, every one of which I eagerly drank in, as if upon them the fate of my soul indeed depended.

VI.

Armstrong spoke as follows :—

“ ‘Where are you ?’ Your soul is here in chaos, the haunt of departed spirits; your body is elsewhere,—in the grave to which it was carried, I suppose. Your soul and your body will some day be reunited, and then, I firmly believe, you will be taken to heaven, there to be happy for eternity. ‘Why are you here ?’ You are here because your transgressions forbade your being allowed to enter Paradise forthwith; your merits were mercifully deemed sufficient to save you from the doom of hell, and consequently the middle state was your proper portion. The mercy which has so far protected your soul from everlasting torments is generous and comprehensive to a degree, which it would be very dangerous that human beings should understand. If they could indeed understand it, a few base wretches might be stimulated to make successful exertions in the cause of their own salvation; but, on the other hand, many persons who had hitherto been restrained from sin by the dread of

hell alone, would let loose some of their wicked passions, as soon as they thought that they could do so without incurring the one penalty which, like the gibbet to the felon, had been a definite and intelligible object of fear to them.

“But do not presume to think, Henry Coke, that by a lenient admission into Paradise, or into this chaos even, your final salvation is positively secured, or your final doom positively averted. We may indeed be purged of our sins, and I humbly hope that as regards yourself it is so; but I have no certain knowledge to that effect,—on the contrary, I have ascertained, beyond doubt, that our judgment is still to take place, although, when that day comes, our fate will have been already miraculously shadowed to those of us who are able to interpret the revelation. On this subject I dare not tell you more. Nor can I give you any information with respect to the length of your probation; for I am not able to see into your heart, by doing which I might compare it to my own, of which I do know something.

“As to the power which directs your path and

mine, after what I have already told you, you will hardly desire to know more. Our bodies, indeed, have sometimes been found so vile, that they have been handed for a time to the custody of the devil; but our souls, never fear, are far too precious to be ever submitted to his uncontrolled charge.

“I know very well that you have lately been distracted by doubts and fears; and yet, my dear Hal, you have met with some signal mercies, which have not been inferior in proportion to those harassing experiences which have been given to you for chastisement, and merited correction.

“And now, something more which must distress you. I doubt not, that could you always be armed with the knowledge you possess at this moment, you would be able to face every trial and temptation with a glad indifference. You would have the most interested motives conceivable in doing what is right. But, alas! a continuous memory, the greatest blessing that can here be enjoyed, is at present denied you. Nevertheless, you will never be exposed, in your

present state of existence, or in the future, to some of the greatest promptings to evil which you encountered in the world."

The greater part of Armstrong's discourse had filled me with hope, and the determination to bear my present lot with fortitude; but his concluding words, that the blessing of a "continuous memory" would be denied me, threw me again into despair. I said as much to Armstrong. He smiled sadly, and observed, "Perhaps it would have been better to have told you nothing."

"Not so," said I. "But tell me this, Jack—the place where I found my beloved relations?"

"That place is Paradise," said Armstrong.

"How did I gain admission there before?" I asked him.

"On that occasion," he answered, "you were permitted the inestimable indulgence at my own earnest petition."

"And when may I hope for another glimpse of that happiness?" I asked.

"That I cannot tell you, Henry," answered Armstrong; "but a certain sign is always sent

to those for whom any change is designed—a sign which I think you may learn to interpret for yourself.”

With these words Armstrong rose, and before I could detain him, began striding up the rocky path. I followed him as quickly as I could, calling out, “Are you leaving me, Jack? Do you mean to leave me?” In reply, he held up his forefinger, as if warning me not to speak, and I found that we were at the door of a small chapel. We went in together, and both knelt down.

How I lost sight, and all thought also, of my friend, my good genius, my preserver, whom I had but lately resolved never to quit for an instant, I cannot explain. I was engaged in listening to a preacher, from whose discourse I in vain endeavoured to derive any sense. “We are the salt of the earth,” he kept repeating; and then varied the phrase into, “We are the *sult* of the earth; we are the *suds* of the earth.” Every now and then he turned to an altar behind him, and bowed to it with an air of solemn mockery; and each time he did so, the congregation scattered about the chapel stood up and did the

same. At last some of those who were present commenced leaping over the pews that divided them. I tried not to heed them, but to listen to the words of the preacher. But he only kept shouting his unintelligible phrase, "We are the suds of the earth;" and presently, after heavily frowning at me, he covered his face with one hand, and waved the other at me, as if to say that I was lost. Lost indeed I was; and amidst derisive howls from every one round me, I fled in despair from the scene.

VII.

Having escaped from the chapel, I found myself on a large open plain, but I ran on without pausing to think whither I was going. I did so from a belief that I was pursued; and certainly several persons were running behind me. When, however, some of these had caught me up, they passed on, and seemed to be all hastening away on some errand which did not concern me. I then slackened my pace to a leisurely walk, looking about me in hopes of seeing houses to

which I might direct my steps. I was on some downs, which I saw were of great extent, and at last, knowing no better plan to adopt, I marked out in my mind's eye a straight line, and endeavoured to follow it. As I went on, I perceived large bodies of soldiers marching to and fro. Although they were most of them very strangely dressed, I made out that a great many of them were English, while the rest seemed to belong to three or four different nations. Those who passed near me were all deformed, like the French I had once seen before. At length I found myself nearly surrounded by troops; and wishing to avoid falling into the hands of foes, I made my way towards a spot where only the English were posted. I soon came close to a brigade of red-coats. The men had been lying on their faces, but when I approached them they sprang to their feet and pointed their pieces at me. Bending my head to escape their fire, I turned and fled. A volley was then discharged, but I suppose I was unhurt. I ran on, and presently found myself amongst some cavalry—German horse, I should say. At first they took no notice of me, and I

passed close to several without being challenged or molested. Just then I came in sight of the sea, or of a section of the sea (as I shall shortly explain), and I hastened forward, intending to gain the beach. But one of the soldiers at that moment espied me, and running up to me, shouted, "Oh, I shall give you a knock on the head!" At the same time, he made several passes at me with his sword. I now remembered that I had lost my own weapon; and I think I said something to that effect, for the soldier pointed to the ground, where I at once saw my sword, and the belt to which I used to attach it, lying on the ground. I stooped to pick up my property; but as I did so, the soldier leapt upon my back, again shouting, but this time in a more joking manner, "I shall give you a knock on the head." But having repossessed myself of my sword, I turned its point under my left arm, and plunged it—so I believed—into my assailant's body. He immediately rolled in the dust, crying out, "*Oh, meine mutter! Oh, meine liebe frau!*" I hurried away in the direction of the sea, but constantly looked back to see whether I was

being pursued. Presently some of the wounded man's comrades did seem to comprehend what had taken place, and to be making preparations for giving chase. They were so very dilatory, however, that I made good my retreat, though in a very singular manner. I was moving backwards, trying to see whether the pursuit had commenced, when I suddenly went over the edge of the cliff, and found myself falling through space. The sensation was not disagreeable, and my journey came to an end without any catastrophe to myself. Instead of being dashed to pieces against the shingle, I sank slowly into it, and not higher than just above my ankles. I then began to regard fresh wonders that were before me. The sea rose straight up like a wall of crystal, and within it, and not on it, were numerous vessels. They were chiefly English frigates and sloops of war; but near where I was standing, a strange, foreign-looking craft lay at anchor. Those on board seemed to be very busily engaged, and I could plainly distinguish their faces. They were all deadly pale, and evidently in great anxiety. One of them presently beckoned to me to

come on board, I thought, and I called out to him, "I have no boat;" upon which a boat was sent off to me, and I embarked in it. Although I had done this of my own free will, I had no sooner left the shore than I realised that I was a prisoner. My captors, however, did not take me back to their own ship, but steered instead for one of the English men-of-war; and when they had come alongside, without speaking, pointed to me as if inquiring whether I could be taken on board. I also made signs to the captain of the frigate, meaning to beg him to rescue me. But he only seized a speaking-trumpet, and roared through it, "Haul your topsails! North-east by north!"—words which no rational sailor would ever have uttered. I was next taken to another English frigate, and there I saw that some festivities were going on. An officer very smartly dressed, and with a bouquet of flowers fastened to his coat, at once invited me to come on board. I stepped on to the gunwale of the boat, and passing through a great opening, or porthole, in the side of the frigate, found myself in a vast chamber, which I should have taken to be one of the decks but for

its apparently boundless size. I saw many cannon lying pointed, and there were piles of shot, coils of rope, and several pikes and cutlasses; but that which should have been the deck was a stone pavement. I now became seized with the desire to fire one of the cannon at the boat of my recent captors. Accordingly, I advanced to a gun which stood near me, and taking up a slow-match which I found burning, applied it to the touch-hole. A tremendous discharge took place, not only from the gun which I had fired, but from all the cannon in the place. Feeling that I had done great mischief, for which I might be punished, I then hid myself in a recess which I found, and for some time I lay on a coil of rope, not daring to peep out or show myself. At length, however, I ventured forth. I found the pavement covered with moisture, as if it had been raining. Overhead was the sky, dotted with stars, and I made out that I was on a rampart. Looking about me, I soon discerned the lights of a considerable town. I at once started in the direction of these lights, and presently came to streets and houses. No one else seemed to be stirring, and I determined

to seek shelter for the remainder of the night. Seeing what appeared to be a reputable inn, I knocked at the door. Mine host in person answered the summons; and so far from showing any surprise at my arrival, he seemed to have been expecting me, for he took up two lighted candles upon a table, and immediately walked up-stairs, smiling and bowing all the time. He ushered me into a good-sized bedroom, which it seemed to me I had seen before. Although I felt a strong desire to sleep, the whim came to me to order supper, and I said to the landlord, "Let me have supper."

"What would you be pleased to like?" answered he.

"Some meat," said I.

"Some meat," repeated he.

"Some game and a pasty," said I.

"Some game and a pasty," repeated he.

"Some vegetables; a pudding; some wine," said I; and without any reason I enumerated enough materials to have furnished twenty people with a banquet, and the landlord reiterated each item. At last he left me, and, as far as I know,

never returned. I presently lay down on the bed, but immediately started up again, for I beheld, standing by the fire, counting some money in his hand, my own image or double.

Whether I became accustomed to the vision, and paid no further heed to it, or whether I thought it nothing more than a delusion, and therefore disregarded it, I cannot say. I only know that, notwithstanding what I saw, I soon either fell asleep or passed into a trance.

VIII.

When I next saw the light I was sitting in the ruined temple, conversing with my mother and Alice. The scene was in every respect the same as when I had beheld it for the first time—the sweet melody of the birds softly reigned on every side; all care and perplexity were banished from my thoughts; and my memory, with most happy treachery, carried me straight back to the last time I had been in the same spot; since when, no interval seemed to me to have elapsed. So I remembered nothing of the hut, and of the mys-

terious parting which had there taken place. Nor, I should say, had my father any recollection of that matter. He was at this moment engaged in picking flowers at a little distance from us; and since botany had always been his favourite pursuit, I am sure that he was well contented.

As I have said, my mother, my sister, and I were conversing together. Our discourses, always agreeable, had turned to a subject which, during my lifetime, had especially interested me. This was the question, Whether a future spiritual existence awaits the various animals who minister, directly or indirectly, to the wants of human beings on earth? I had often felt that the Scriptures did not supply conclusive information on the subject. For though animals are more than once referred to as "the beasts of the field which perish," other passages would certainly seem to imply the existence of the same beasts in another state. I had come to the conclusion that the many creatures other than human of which we read as appearing in heaven, or descending thence, must be creatures which had never known any previous world. Now, however, the

presence of Alice's dog, Rover, led me into fresh speculations; and it is strange that in thus inquiring as to the nature of his happiness, whether it was permanent or temporary, I never thought of applying the same questions to myself, to my own condition. "Whatever the divine law may be, mother," said I, after some discussion had taken place, "we may rest assured that it will be revealed to us some time in the course of this everlasting life."

Something approaching sadness passed over the countenance of my mother, and she glanced at Alice (who had not heard my observation) with a peculiar expression in her face. Just then my father came towards us, and Alice exclaimed,—
"Oh, father! we have been talking about being allowed to have our pets with us here, and I have been keeping a surprise for Henry. Shall I tell about Traveller, or will you?"

"Nay, my dear; Traveller is happy enough," answered my father; and he looked almost uneasy.

Traveller was the name of a favourite hunter I had possessed in my lifetime, and I naturally inquired, "Is he here?"

My father made some pause before answering, "He is."

Then little Alice seized me by the hand, saying, "Do come and see him, Henry."

I was only too glad to agree, and, without noticing the looks of my father and mother, followed my sister as she ran down the terraces leading to the fertile plains beneath us. She and I presently came to a grove of citrons, passing through which, we emerged on a good-sized meadow, covered with a very rich kind of grass, and intersected by a winding stream of extraordinary clearness and beauty. Here little Alice stood still, and began calling "Traveller." He had been lying down under the shade of some trees a little distance off, where I had not perceived him; but as soon as he heard Alice calling him, he came galloping up to us. He immediately recognised his old master, and, whinnying in a most expressive manner, thrust out his head and licked my hand. After I had caressed him for some time, he seemed to desire me to mount him; for, standing in a convenient position close to me, he arched his neck, pawed the ground, and

playfully rolled his eye. I did not think of resisting his invitation, but vaulted at once on to his back. I then took hold of a lock of his mane, and he galloped off with a loud, exulting neigh.

As we dashed along together, I lost all thought of Alice and of my parents, and my mind became filled instead with recollections of the many occasions when Traveller and I had followed the hounds. At last my attention was recalled to the present by Traveller's slackening his pace. We had left the grass plain far behind us, and were now threading our way through a forest of oak. We presently came to a small open space, and there my horse stopped of his own accord, and began cropping some ferns that grew about us. Upon this I dismounted, and began looking round, in order to see, if possible, where I was. The trees were very thick overhead, and the little sky which I perhaps might have discerned was obscured by a thick fog. However, a few yards in front of me was a hillock, and I at once walked to it, and climbed up to the top, with the intention of obtaining a view of the country round about.

I gazed about me, but was instantly struck

with awe and amazement. I had often heard the heavens poetically described as a "dome," and had thought the expression, as a metaphor, just; but here, close to my side, innumerable closely joined fleecy clouds composed an actual wall, which descended in concave form from above. Between me and this wall lay an abyss, the mouth of which was choked by a heavy white mist. Walking slowly down the side of the hillock, with wrapt attention and earnest glance I approached the abyss. The distance across it I at first judged to be about a furlong; but after peering into the mist a little longer, I made out the breadth to be at least twice as great.

I then stood gazing at the nebulous curtain on the other side, trying with all my might to discern what might be beyond. At the same time I endeavoured to realise my situation, and the result was that I came to a certain decision, and made a most presumptuous resolution which I do not care to reveal. "This gulf or misty abyss," thought I, "does not extend for ever in each direction; or even if it does, there is doubtless some bridge or other passage across, which it is

intended that I should discover." I began to look along the bank on which I stood, in the hope of seeing some signs of what I was vainly seeking ; but just as I turned away from the particular spot into which I had been peering, I fancied that something glittered there for a moment. At first this fancy was not confirmed ; but presently the clouds in that quarter drifted apart, and an opening, something in the shape of a bower, was made in the fleecy wall. With enforced irresistible awe I then beheld what I can only most weakly describe. A winged being, with a countenance of surpassing majesty and benignity,—a man, set with a face which that of no mortal man ever equalled,—a face which manifested a superiority over every possible human weakness, every conceivable human passion—a face which told of wisdom and of contentment each of a kind unknown to mortal creatures. As this being turned his eyes upon me, I found myself unable to meet his gaze ; and throwing myself on the ground, I could do nothing more than murmur a few words, meant to express my profound humility. I was presently touched on the shoulder, and a solemn, clear

voice said, "You cannot anticipate your destiny. Depart, and be patient." I did not dare to look up; but in low, agitated tones said, "Heavenly being! I am a most miserable, unworthy, degraded wretch. But oh, let my numberless transgressions be forgiven, and do not too closely weigh my few, most few, merits!" He whom I had thus addressed was at first silent, but, after a little time, spoke again. "You have not yet been judged," he said; "when you are judged you will have a mediator." These words gave me indescribable comfort; and having kissed the robe which hung down near my face, I presently rose, and seeing no one, walked back to the hillock.

IX.

On the other side of the hillock I found my faithful horse lying on the ground resting himself. On perceiving me he first whinnied, and then, scrambling to his feet, he gave himself a long and hearty shake. After that he allowed me to leap upon his back as I had done before; and then, without waiting for any orders from me,

he trotted off, picking his way very dexterously through the deep forest. He did not take the same path as that by which we had come, but kept constantly, and as if with a decided purpose, to another direction more to the right. We presently came out on the shore of a great river. Here Traveller paused; and then, having hit upon a ford, he walked a little way into the stream, and stopped to drink. He drank for several moments; but as soon as he had finished, trotted straight across the river, climbed the bank, and then, uttering a prolonged neigh, broke into a furious gallop. We were now bounding over a moor of vast extent. The appearance of all around was barren and bleak; black clouds gathered overhead, but Traveller galloped on. Soon it grew perfectly dark; the rain fell heavily (though I could not feel it); the thunder crashed, and forked lightning tore up the ground close to me. Still Traveller continued to dash forward at the same wild pace.

At length I determined to stop him, and with that purpose laid hold of his mane with both hands, and pulled at it with all my might; but

he only curved his neck round for an instant to gnash his teeth at my leg, and then pursued his headlong course.

For what space of time our journey lasted I will not attempt to say, but it came to an end as follows. Having left the moor behind us, we came to a number of small vineyards, enclosed by little walls, over which Traveller leapt with the greatest ease. At last, however, I saw straight before me a huge wall, I should think forty feet high, built of stone, and guarded at the top by a double row of spikes. I had just resolved to throw myself to the ground, when Traveller lowered his head, and in an instant made his way through a small aperture or doorway which I had not perceived. There was barely room for his own passage, and as for me I was flung to the ground on the inside. I quickly sprang to my feet again, and ran through the opening to see what had happened to Traveller. He had not attempted to leap the wall, for I had seen him pass safely through the doorway; yet I now found him, a few yards from the wall, on the outside, lying on the ground groaning with agony,

his limbs being shattered to pieces. After a little reflection, I drew a pistol which I had been carrying, and with deep regret clapped it to my old friend's ear, and pulled the trigger. But the powder appeared to be damp, and my fire did not take place. I then, for the first time, looked about me, in the hope of seeing some signs that assistance was within reach; but my eyes immediately lit upon a spectacle which filled me with horror and alarm. On every side I saw the bodies of horses, either dead, or, like poor Traveller, hopelessly disabled, and round these bodies were packs of wolves, some of them already gorging themselves with carrion, others advancing to attack fresh prey. A troop of the savage beasts presently rushed towards me; and though I was very determined to defend myself when it should become necessary, I first looked about me to see whether escape or concealment might not be possible. My eager glance fell upon Traveller, when I at once noticed that a large strip of skin lay loose on his side. I lifted up this skin like a curtain, and creeping into my horse's carcase, lay there awaiting the attack.

I remained in that situation for some length of time, but I saw, felt, or heard nothing more of the wolves ; and at last, finding my cramped position very irksome, I cautiously ventured forth. Broad daylight seemed to be reigning, and indeed I cannot remember when or how the darkness which had prevailed came to an end. The first object that now attracted my attention was the external appearance of my horse. Excepting his eyes, which were still in their sockets, and greatly distended, all that remained of him was his skeleton, which appeared to be of most unnatural size. On examining what I had supposed to be a strip of his skin (and I did this in order to learn by what means I had been concealed), I found that it was nothing but an old piece of sacking. As I once more took a survey of the country, I noticed that not only were there no wolves to be seen, but that the remains on which they had been feasting had all been devoured or otherwise removed. I stood by poor Traveller's gigantic skeleton, and wondered where I was, and what I might expect to see next. Presently I became possessed of the fear that I was in an Eastern

desert, and that I should perish of hunger and thirst; and without any real craving, but rather from a sort of caprice, I began looking for water in every direction. I might have thought of the well-watered country through which I had lately ridden; but the great wall, the only landmark which could have taken me there, had long since disappeared. In no direction could I see any trace of water, or any signs whatever of habitation. I say "in no direction," meaning in none of the directions north, south, east, or west. It never occurred to me to look overhead for the kind of assistance which I thought I required.

At last, however, with a natural gesture of appeal, I did glance upwards, and was at first nearly overpowered with joy by what I saw. A vast mountain, the base of which was hidden by vapour, projected over my head at a great height. I could see pretty plainly houses and churches, and horses and carriages, with several people passing to and fro. My satisfaction and thankfulness were complete, when another discovery dashed away all my hopes, and turned my gladness into deep despair.

A certain iron balustrade, which I recognised with horror, had loomed into view overhead, and I became aware that I was at the bottom of that pit into which I had once miraculously escaped being hurled.

X.

The haze which had enshrouded the base of the mountain, and with which the whole atmosphere at a little distance round about me had been charged, now commenced to disperse, and I saw that I was enclosed on every side by stone walls, in some places formed by the rocks, in others built up separately. When I had fully realised the appalling nature of my position, I threw myself on the ground, and, covering my face with my hands, for some time indulged in unrestrained grief. I then tried to console myself by sober reflection. An inward voice kept telling me, "There is some special reason why you should fear nothing." And I cudgelled my brain in order to think what that reason was. I was, in fact, unconsciously seeking to grasp the recollec-

tion of Armstrong's friendly counsel and comforting revelations.

While I lay thus occupied, I did not know that a great crowd of persons had assembled near me. When I at length looked up again, however, I perceived them, and, getting up from the ground, quietly mingled with the throng. Nearly every one about me was talking in the French language, and all were dressed more or less in the strange fashion that I had lately noticed. The crowd seemed to be expecting some arrival of importance,—that I gathered from the eager, vehement remarks they made. But wishing to be more particularly informed, I went up to a respectable-looking man, whom I rightly judged by his florid complexion to be a Briton, and civilly asked him to tell me what was going on. He answered, "The martyr is coming."

"And pray, sir," said I, "who may this martyr be?"

"The saviour of society, the intrepid Hébert," he replied; "but, alas! do not ask me whither he is bound."

"I fear," said I, "that I am behind the times

in information. Perhaps you will inform me who this great personage is, for I have never heard his name until this moment?"

Upon this the man immediately shouted, "A spy! an aristocrat!"

I saw that he applied the epithets, both in an offensive sense, to me, and not to the person of whom he had been speaking, so I seized him by the collar and gave him a hearty shaking. He made no attempt at resistance, but as soon as I had let him go, said, "I was mistaken; citizen, you are a friend of the people," with which he took to his heels.

A general murmur now told me that the object which the crowd waited to see was approaching. A most strange and horrible procession then passed by.

First came a savage-looking wretch with a complexion the colour of flint—like that of the fiend with whom I had struggled at the mouth of the pit. He was nearly naked, and carried a great iron mace, painted black. Behind him came about twenty gentlemen dressed more gaily than those I had lately seen. Each one of them, without

exception, bore on his face a look of such firm determination as I had never seen before ; each one, dreadful to behold and dreadful even to relate, had his throat freshly cut. All had their swords drawn, apparently for the protection of the next group that followed.

The next group was composed of stately ladies, most of whom were leading children of various ages. The faces of many of these ladies wore the same resolute looks as I had observed in the men. The children were nearly all weeping. Both women and children had the same ghastly marks on their necks as the men.

Next to these came a phalanx of Romish priests. Most of them were singing or reading aloud from books which they carried open in their hands. Their throats were disfigured like those of the preceding groups.

After the priests came a host of persons of every degree. Some appeared like well-to-do tradespeople ; others seemed to be mechanics ; and a great many were nothing more than a ragged rabble ; but all had gashes hacked in their necks. This part of the procession was closed

by a band of twenty creatures who resembled the demon at the head of the train, and who, as he did, carried large clubs or maces of iron.

Then the crowd gave a roar of excitement, and I beheld an unhappy wretch of a man, and a still more unhappy wretch of a woman, each separately pinioned, yet both fastened together by a horribly painful contrivance — namely, a single metal ring thrust through their two noses in such a manner that one of them, the woman, was compelled to move along sideways. As for the man, whom they called Hébert, though the mob hailed him as a hero and a martyr, it was impossible for me to be deceived by his appearance, which was that of a most cruel, low-minded, desperate ruffian. But the poor woman, whatever her crimes may have been, strongly excited my pity. She had a graceful figure, rich black hair, well-formed, rather sharp features, and eyes of a deep blue. Her face did not possess the stamp of high birth, and yet it wore an expression of great natural refinement and sensibility. As she staggered along she hardly ever ceased screaming, wringing her hands, and imploring the aid of the Virgin Mary. The crowd,

however, only ridiculed her dreadful anguish and suffering, bestowing all its sympathy on the man to whom she was bound by the hideous ring. He constantly reviled the poor woman, kicked her, and even spat upon her, as he blundered on. The poor creature once raised her eyes to look round her with an imploring glance, but her ruffianly yoke-fellow only butted her with his forehead, and shouted, "*Baisses tes yeux, malheureuse petite Manon !*" The mob seemed greatly to relish this brutality, and gave Hébert a hearty cheer. But I said to myself, "It is impossible that this woman can have committed any crimes for which such punishment is not vindictive and excessive." And, enraged at the spectacle of her horrible sufferings, I sprang forward, intending, single-handed, to effect her rescue ; but I rushed against an invisible pillar, and was thrown to the ground, while these words came to my lips as self-reproof, "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord."

XI.

The procession had passed out of sight, the mob had followed, and I was alone. I rose, and sorrowfully debated what course I should next take in order to find a means of escape from my confinement. Just then the sound of female voices fell upon my ear; and turning to the direction whence the sound came, I saw two ladies, of very agreeable appearance, walking up a path in the side of the rock. At the same time I was overjoyed to perceive that a vast gate in the wall opposite to me stood open. I immediately darted through the opening, but as I did so, I held out both hands in front of me, like a person running in the dark, from the fear with which my recent collision with the invisible pillar had inspired me.

I safely gained the path outside the wall, and believing that some stratagem was necessary, began creeping up the hill in a stooping posture, intending to overtake the two ladies, and then pretend that I had been in their company for some time.

But though they were only a little distance in advance, it appeared to me as though I should never catch them. My knees seemed to give way, and I panted as if with physical exertion. Every moment I expected to be pursued by a flinty-faced imp, with an iron mace; and at length I began to fear that I was going backwards instead of forward. In dreadful agony of mind I faintly called to the ladies to stop. They were then not more than twenty yards in front of me, and on hearing my cry, immediately obeyed my request, and waited for me until I was by their side. On seeing them more closely, I was favourably impressed by them both, but especially by the elder of the two. They were both very handsome women; and neither of them had any of those deformities which I had become accustomed to see. The younger of the two was a beautiful maiden of about eighteen, but the other could not have been more than twice that age, at the most; and I could hardly believe that she was, as she proved to be, the younger lady's mother. Both of them greeted me with pleasant, reassuring smiles, and then began thanking me "for the

great service I had performed." I thanked them in return for their compliments, but could not resist asking, "What service I was so happy as to have performed?"

"Like most brave men, you are modest, sir," said the mother, adding, "if you had not cleared the way for us through the rabble, and then shown us the gates left open, we might have both remained in that frightful place for ever; or at least, until we had met with some other cavalier as bold and as amiable as yourself."

I answered, "I really was not aware that I had been so fortunate. On the contrary, it is to you that I owe my own deliverance, for which I can never sufficiently express my profound, everlasting gratitude." Directly I had made this speech, the younger lady quickly seized my hand, and placing it in that of her mother, eagerly exclaimed—

"Oh, mother, dear mother, he is your good genius!"

For one instant the unfamiliar passion of love darted into my breast, and I know not what I might have said or done, had not the words

"good genius" almost directly operated like a potent charm.

I began staring into vacancy, striking my forehead, and muttering, "Good genius! my good genius, Armstrong! Oh, Armstrong! Armstrong! come and help me! When are the promises you held out to me to be fulfilled? For how long am I to be distracted and tormented? When am I to be saved? Oh, save me! save me! my beloved friend, my only, only hope!"

The mother now spoke. "Surely, Mr Coke," said she, "you are a Christian?"

"Indeed I am, madam," I answered; "or rather, I am one of those 'who profess and call themselves' Christians."

"Then why do you indulge in such profanity?" she said; adding, "are you accustomed always to appeal to this Armstrong, instead of to your Creator?"

"Your rebuke is most just," said I. And falling on my knees, I earnestly prayed to Heaven for guidance and aid.

I had not long been thus engaged when a voice, in kind, familiar tones, exclaimed, "What,

Hal! still wandering?" and Armstrong stood before me.

"My dear Armstrong!" I cried, embracing him. "My good genius!"

"So I am your good genius, in default of a better," said he. "But what has been happening to you?" He then lowered his voice and looked more serious. "How comes it that you have returned a second time?"

We were now alone together, for the two ladies had mysteriously departed.

"Returned," I answered, "and for a second time! I remember. But let me answer you at my leisure, for the faculty of recollection has only this moment come back to me."

"But it will never again desert you," said Armstrong.

These words greatly agitated me, and I asked him, "Do you swear this?"


"I have said it," he answered; "so take courage."

"Courage!" I exclaimed—"what more can I wish for to give me courage? Armed with the

gift of memory, I can once more cherish hope; and amidst all the perplexities and other torments to which I may be exposed, I can steadfastly look forward to the day of my final deliverance."

"A day not far distant, I earnestly trust," said Armstrong. "But tell me," he continued, "what your experiences have been since the last time we spoke together near this spot. You have seen your family, and have been happy with them, I know. But explain to me how it came to pass that you were driven back into chaos, and that I found you in this most dangerous place."

I related my adventures with minuteness, and he listened with silent attention, until I began to describe what had befallen me at the wall of fleecy cloud. At that point in my narrative he gave a deep sigh, and observed, as if to himself, "Then came the temptation. Yes; I feared as much." He then allowed me to proceed without any further interruption. In due course I related my long ride; old Traveller's end; my



concealing myself from the wolves (at which Armstrong smiled); my horrified discovery that I was confined in the pit; the procession of demons and French that I had witnessed; my collision with an invisible pillar; my meeting with the two ladies; and my eventual escape to comparative safety. When I had finished he remarked—

“You have undergone a good deal, certainly; but your sufferings and trials have been mere drops in the water compared with mine.”

“Poor Jack!” said I. “Do time and place admit of your telling me the ordeals to which you have been subjected?”

“As to time, in the ordinary sense,” answered Armstrong, “it is in vain for us to attempt to reckon it here; and as to place, one place is to me just as safe and convenient now as another. Nevertheless, I believe that the present occasion is auspicious, and I think it very likely that I may be able to impart to you certain portions of my history.”

XII.

Armstrong then spoke as follows :—

“ In the first place, I must tell you that we are brothers. Amongst the immortal souls, there are degrees of relationship which are quite as distinct as those degrees of consanguinity that exist among mortal bodies on earth ; and as bonds of love, and for final purposes, they are infinitely more reliable. The one sort of tie has no original connection with the other, yet are they sometimes united by a providential arrangement of circumstances ; and we see father and son, mother and daughter, or brother and sister, showing for one another a degree of affection which is, humanly speaking, inexplicable, and which is immeasurably deeper than even they themselves suppose. It happens also, though very rarely, that a marriage takes place between persons whose souls are already joined together by the spiritual bond, and such unions are always marvellously happy. Of this matter I have now told you all that it is necessary you should know. The subject is vast

and mysterious, and I comprehend it but imperfectly myself.

"We are brothers, then, and ever have been. You will now understand that sudden yet invulnerable friendship which sprang up between us almost as soon as we met for the first time, and that extraordinary interest which each of us always felt in the other's welfare, notwithstanding the fact that, until my father's death, you and I were often separated for years at a time. But of my life, excepting as to the existence and nature of the spiritual bond, which I have tried to explain, you know almost as much as I do. It is of what befell me after my death that you would be informed.

"I died with my hand raised to take the life of a fellow-creature. My quarrel I thought to be just; and human nature has not yet learnt but that quarrels may be just, and even necessary. Yet what of that? In heaven no such justice is recognised; and no sooner had my soul left its mortal habitation than the doom already pronounced was carried into effect. I was first launched, as it were, over a precipice; I was then

hurled through space. My flight suddenly ended, I seemed to be suspended in air, and thus I remained for, I believe, twenty whole years. Pitchy darkness reigned about me. I never beheld any other being, or any object whatever. I never heard any sound, excepting my own groans, which I heard in the same manner as you are now hearing me. I would have then eagerly welcomed as happiness all that at another stage of my probation I was forced to endure as punishment. Sometimes, with mechanical effort, I strove to escape from my confinement ; but whenever I did so, I received a shock as from a stroke of lightning, and I learnt that I could not stir with impunity. But this was not the worst. You have felt the curse of having no memory ; but I was justly refused even the blessing of thought. I tried to hope, I tried to consider, but in vain. I tried to pray, but could frame no words of prayer, even in my inmost heart. I even tried to despair. But that also was denied me,—I could only suffer !

“The years through which I endured these agonies seemed to be indeed ages ; and had I

been able to reflect during that time, I should most surely have believed that my punishment was to be eternal. At length, however, the divine wrath was appeased, and divine pity took its place. Thought returned to me, and I was enabled at last to lament my sins, to acknowledge the justice of my chastisement, and humbly to implore forgiveness. Soon afterwards the black gloom of my prison was changed to a dusky light which my sight could better penetrate; and I was visited by an old Roman who had been suffering well-merited torture for many centuries. Although he had actually been one of the greatest wretches the world had ever produced, to me he seemed like an angel; and as for the effect that my own appearance had on him, directly he saw me he began worshipping me. He afterwards told me that, during the latter period of his punishment, he had been distracted by the conviction that there was but one God—a God of whom he had never heard, but whom it was his duty to worship—and that on seeing me he had supposed me to be that Deity.

“In company with the old Roman, I wandered

through the Region of Detention, as it is there called, and met with many strange adventures. They were much of the same kind as those which befell you, but with this difference: I never saw the spirit of any one whom I had honestly loved. Some I saw were persons of whom I had read in history, and whose names I had been accustomed to execrate. Amongst those, I once beheld the savage and remorseless Jeffreys—a judge of James the Second's time; and I was astonished to hear that the greater portion of his victims were sharing his duration with him. Others were there whose memory I had been taught to venerate; and I may tell you that my companion, the old Roman, had once been styled the 'father of his country.' Within and underneath the Region of Detention is the Inner Hell, or place of eternal punishment. It is, I believe, an unfathomable pit, and resembles in some respects that other pit which you have recently left, and which is really nothing more than a part of the Region of Detention. I was told by the old Roman—how he knew it, I never heard—that the Inner Hell is choked with flames and lava, and that dreadful shrieks,

and a great noise of heavy chains rattling, are perpetually heard to proceed from it. There are comparatively few for whom the awful fate of eternal punishment is reserved; and it is only of late years that any considerable increase has taken place in the number of the doomed ones. The latter circumstance is owing, so I have heard, to the great spread of unsound learning which has recently taken place in the world—learning by which men have become, at the same time, more clever and less wise; which has taught them many of the secrets of their own insignificant daily affairs, but which has obscured the great secrets which concern the welfare of their souls. A short time ago whole bands were consigned for ever to the Inner Hell—bands formed of persons who had been taking part in a great revolution, in which many most bloody crimes, crying to heaven for vengeance, had been perpetrated,—not in ignorance, as of old, but knowingly, exultingly, and in defiance of the appalling consequences.

“My singular companion and I used to converse upon what we saw in Latin,—at first with the greatest difficulty, owing to my not readily

understanding his method of pronunciation, but latterly with comparative ease, he speaking very slowly, and listening to me with his small eyes twinkling with eagerness to discover my meaning. Sometimes, too, he would suggest a word for which I was seeking by writing it on the ground with his finger.

“But his destiny and mine were different, or else their accomplishment was differently timed. Having wandered with Marius in the Region of Detention for a certain period, I one day discovered that he was no more at my side, and the next circumstance that I can recall was my finding myself chained to the oar of a galley which was being fired upon by a fortress near which we lay. The galley was sunk ; I struggled in the sea for some moments ; I felt all those sensations which are supposed to belong to a drowning man ; then I lost consciousness, and my existence became a blank.

“But presently my immortal soul revived, to enjoy a brief interval of such happiness as it had never to my knowledge enjoyed before. I was lying as though my body had just been rescued

from imminent drowning on the shore of a beautiful island. My head reclined in the lap of poor Edith, my young and injured wife."

At this point Armstrong paused in his recital, and turning aside his head, appeared to engage in conversation with some being who was invisible to me. He spoke, and was answered in low, mysterious tones, and I could not hear anything that was said, excepting the last words spoken by both voices: "Farewell until we meet again."

XIII.

For some time after this Armstrong remained silent. His face was hidden in his hands, and he was evidently much agitated. But at length he looked up again, and, having given one deep sigh, thus resumed his narrative:—

"You know the circumstances of my marriage. Alas! though Edith was ever a most devoted wife to me, I made her a wretched return. I should have never thought of marrying her; but her estates adjoined those of my father, and to join our hands, leaving our hearts widely separated, I

suppose seemed to him a righteous as well as a convenient transaction. I was but twenty, and she scarcely seventeen, when we were united. I soon began to treat her with coldness and indifference, though never, I am thankful to say, with active cruelty. I died defending her honour, as the phrase goes ; yet if I had never neglected her, her honour would have been safe from even calumny. But after the unfortunate life that we had led together, what a strange meeting was this after death ! When you were released from chaos for the first time, the beings who immediately greeted you were those whom during your lifetime you had most loved and honoured. But at my first glimpse of Paradise, the form I instantly beheld was that of one whom I had indeed promised to love and to cherish, but whom I had actually treated in a very different manner. In your case was exemplified a merciful and wise law, the intention of which we are able to understand ; but the divine plan illustrated in my case is as incomprehensible to me now as it was at the time. Can it be that all marriages made on earth are binding in heaven ?—the Scriptures

seem explicitly to tell us the contrary. Or is it that the souls of those solemnly linked together in the world are designed to continue in heaven the fulfilment of one of the objects with which their earthly union took place,—the object of being a mutual help and comfort to each other? All this will one day be made manifest. But be it as it may, it was with my poor Edith that I first tasted this unspeakable happiness.

“What passed on the occasion of our first meeting after death, I cannot precisely tell you. We were not reconciled; for it seemed rather as though there now existed between us love and friendship that had endured for ages without interruption. She was meek, yet innocently confident; I was gentle and assiduously kind. Happy, almost perfectly happy, in our own society, and amidst the glories by which we were surrounded, we passed away our time. But my respite was short,—I was not long permitted the enjoyment of this new-born bliss. Having fallen asleep in Edith’s arms in the land of peace and beauty, I awoke to find myself alone and in chaos. I will not attempt to describe each

phantom that I beheld, every perplexity that I encountered, or the several dangers and mortifications to which I was exposed. In those respects you have similarly suffered, and therefore need no further information. At this stage of my history, therefore, I shall relate only those matters in which your own fate was more or less directly concerned.

“I cannot exactly tell you when it was that my profound interest in your welfare first revived. But that interest, though it had for a long time been dormant, had never died; and I no sooner regained the power of thinking (I thought, it is true, only after a certain dream-like fashion), than the brotherly bond began faintly to reassert itself in the midst of all my troubles. My mind was incapable of spontaneously turning to the question whether you were alive or dead; but, nevertheless, I had somewhere in my heart a deep anxiety to know what was befalling you; and after I had been recalled to thoughts of the world by again seeing Edith, this anxiety came more to the surface, and I found myself definitely longing to know when

and where I should be able to renew my friendship with you. I was one day sitting at the playhouse; the performance I witnessed was perplexing enough, as you can conceive. I could make out nothing either from the scenes presented or the words uttered, until, of a sudden, I heard your name mentioned. One of the actresses said, 'Henry Coke my love shall be.' Upon which the whole audience, except myself, burst out laughing. Soon afterwards another performer brought in a hat, coat, and boots, and, holding them up over his head, exclaimed—

'These remnants have I lately found
Of him who in the dam was drowned ;'—

at which all the others cried out, 'Henry Coke !' and the audience laughed as before. But I felt that I had to deal with something far more serious than a stage-play,—that I was, in short, on the point of learning your destiny. Imagining that the players who kept speaking of you really had you concealed somewhere at hand, I sprang into their midst, and commanded them to tell me where you were. But they fled in every direc-

tion, and so did the audience. I was left alone. The planks on which I was standing presently seemed to form a raft, which was slowly drifting down a broad stream.

“In due course I reached the land of peace and beauty, and was again by Edith’s side. After I had spent a certain space of time—it seemed to me about three days—in her society, she once, without attempting any explanation, led me to a bark which lay on the sand, just at the water’s edge, and bade me enter it. Without question or any misgiving, I obeyed her, and then pushed off and set sail. Almost as soon as I had done this, my eyes fell upon a scroll that lay in the bottom of my ship. Having taken up the scroll and opened it, I saw to my amazement that the handwriting was that of your father. I then eagerly read these words, ‘The moments are precious ; save my Henry from despair.’ Intending to return for a few moments to the shore, and seek an explanation from Edith, I looked up in order to change my course, but immediately discovered that a hurricane had arisen, that no land was in sight, and that my bark was dashing down a

steep hill of tempestuous sea. The summit of the hill seemed to touch the skies. Everything around me became dark as night, except only the phosphorescent foam which was ploughed up before me. Coupling these circumstances with the communication contained in the scroll, I might have now very properly fancied either that I was flying to your relief, or else that I was myself in danger of destruction, which would prevent my being able to succour you. But to say the truth, you had passed out of my immediate thoughts altogether, and I was under the curious delusion that I was engaged in some great contest of navigation. Presently, however, I was compelled to think of my own safety; for my little ship was boarded by an enemy whom you have in your time encountered and defeated, as I did then.

“It was not until after I had met with many more adventures that the old anxiety returned, and I again became conscious, though only occasionally and at intervals, of a deep longing to know of your wellbeing. I at last met you in the crowd, as you can now remember; and the

strangest and most unaccountable thing of all is this, that, when I did meet you, I felt no joy, no gratitude, no ecstasy of satisfaction whatever. I was not displeased, it is true, but I was almost indifferent. The thought certainly occurred to me, and at once, how I might rescue you from your predicament; but that thought was, I fear, accompanied by another—namely, how I might most quickly discharge the responsibility of having to serve you. I had in my mind a very indistinct impression of having at some period or another found happiness through making a journey by water; and with this vague recollection in my head, I conducted you down to the bank of a river that was near us, and there, showing you a boat, desired you to shift for yourself. But you seemed dissatisfied with my proposal, for you signed me to accompany you elsewhere. You then led me for several miles over a great swamp, and there I lost sight of you, and returned to other scenes. Of course, from what you have since told me, this must have been your second spirit or double.

“When I next saw you, a great and most

happy change had taken place in my condition. I had been once more given such faculties as those just restored to you. With this return of mental force, my brotherly affection for you returned in greater force than ever. A deep yearning to know your fate took the place of all selfish thoughts. It is remarkable, too, that I always felt it my mission rather to protect than merely to help you. I constantly prayed that I might fall in with poor Harry Coke again, if possible, never to be separated,—that I might, at all events, be permitted to express to him my profound sympathy, and to tender to him counsel by which he might profit.

“Once, as I was thus praying, the stones on which I knelt sank from under me, and opened a rocky fissure. I then found myself clinging to the side of a precipice, and beneath I saw you hardly pressed by the enemy of mankind. Doubtless you were almost in despair; but, as I have already told you, that pit we see below us is not the pit we have been taught to fear, but another one much less horrible, through which those who are doomed to suffer eternal punishment some-

times pass, and which is set there, I believe, to instil in our minds, at certain times as we require it, a wholesome terror. Then as to your hideous opponent, he had no power to harm you, except the power you yourself gave him. You may have to face 'Old Crafty' again, so bear this in mind. To conquer him you have only to oppose him with your whole heart. Oppose him with hand and sword if you will, but be sure that you oppose him in your heart at the same time. And do not only hate him,—take care also to despise him. For to those who hate, yet secretly respect him, he may do certain injuries.

“But let me proceed. Is it not strange that, when I at last found you once more, all the ardour of my affection again became chilled? Again I felt obliged to try and befriend you; but again I felt the desire to be quickly rid of the obligation. I had now memory, will, and reason at my command, and I used all three to shake off the unaccountable spell which beset me, yet in vain. An inward voice seemed to warn me against my friend and brother. Nevertheless, I succeeded to a certain extent in freeing myself

from enchantment. I told you matters that I had no right to reveal, and for this I was punished, I need not say how, but with well-merited severity. Soon after this our second meeting, you were taken away to the Land of Happiness, where you would have remained but for that error of presumption which you have told me you committed. As for me, as soon as I had expiated my late offence, I learnt from a certain kind of sign, with which you also are acquainted, that a change was in immediate store for me. I prepared to find myself again by Edith's side; but just then she herself stood before me on this spot. She pointed to the ground, and I there beheld the same scroll which I had found in my ship before. I picked it up, and saw that it was certainly the same. With troubled gaze I looked into Edith's face. She whispered, 'He is lost once more.' I sprang to my feet, but at that instant I saw you, and saw also that you were in company most fatally dangerous——

"But my time is short."

Here Armstrong rose, looking greatly agitated. He repeated his last words, "My time is short,"

and then tried to say more; but his lips moved without any speech issuing from them, and he trembled from head to foot, as if with an ague. I stood up, and began asking him what terrible crisis was at hand. But in an instant a stupendous crash of thunder burst forth, a blazing strip of lightning licked the whole face of the surrounding rocks, and a mighty gust of wind dashed me to the ground, and swept my companion out of sight.

XIV.

For a considerable space of time I lay like one stunned. I did not dare to look up, and indeed felt unable to move at all. I, however, exercised my regenerated faculties by reflecting with awe on what I had lately heard and seen. I was most powerfully impressed by the profound wisdom and mercy of that great plan which I now saw unfolded—a plan of such universal application that it could exactly comprehend the case of one insignificant being like myself. Gratitude soon prevailed over every other sentiment in my breast,

and I presently mustered courage to rise, and, having given one glance round—by which I ascertained that I was in the same spot as before, near the mouth of the pit,—I sank on my knees, and became engaged in earnest thanksgiving and prayer. I was disturbed in my devotions by the sound of sobbing, and looking round, I saw a woman close beside me. She held a handkerchief before her face, as if to hide her tears; but the Spanish mantilla she wore did not altogether conceal a form of extraordinary grace, and I recognised the elder of the two ladies whom I had overtaken on the hillside. My first emotion was that of joy; but then I remembered Armstrong's mysterious words, that he had seen me "in company the most fatally dangerous," and, putting great control over myself, I determined to be on my guard. I first asked her, and with ceremonious politeness, what was the cause of her distress? Uncovering her face, she then turned her beautiful eyes on mine, and answered thus: "You ask me why I am weeping. Do you not see that I have lost the idol of my heart? Do you not know that my darling Clara has been torn from my side?"

"You have lost your daughter then, madam?" said I.

"Lost her!" exclaimed the mother,—“oh yes! while you, my friend and protector, stood heedlessly by.”

She again buried her face in her handkerchief, and wept bitterly.

"Perhaps, madam," I said at length, "it may be possible to find her again."

"Oh, do not mock, do not tantalise me," said the lady; then laying a small and jewelled hand upon my arm, she exclaimed, "I do not mean that, for you are too kind and noble to find any mirth in my distress; but you must know far better than I can that in this land of bewilderment it is vain to talk of 'finding.' No; Clara's presence would have been fatally dangerous to the consummation of that happiness we are presently to enjoy, therefore she was wafted away."

"'Fatally dangerous'!" I murmured, thinking aloud, rather than addressing my companion.

"Yes," said she; "for her probation is to be a longer one than ours—yours and mine. On earth my daughter and I were certainly permitted to

share every pain and every joy ; but here, Providence has chosen that she shall work out her final redemption alone, and that my fate shall be henceforth linked with that of my preserver, my guardian angel, who has both the will and the power to save me from destruction."

With these words, which went straight to my heart, the lady clung to my arm with both hands, and, smiling through her tears, said, in soft, musical tones, " You and I have each wandered through life and through death, unblessed by the sweetest and most ennobling light of love ; but here at length we are united, to endure with joint efforts a few more trials and vexations, and then to share together everlasting happiness."

As she thus spoke, new and strange thoughts came into my mind. A new present and a new future seemed to open for me. It was true that I had " wandered through life and through death " a stranger to woman's love, and many a time had I grieved for my lot on that account. Now, without care or solicitation of my own, this beautiful and intelligent being, who had inspired my admiration and respect the first moment I beheld

her, threw herself at my feet, invoked the protection which I had inwardly been longing to give her, and declared the affection which in my heart I had already become eager to win. What wonder that I set aside the resolution to be on my guard! She had proved to me that the necessity for that resolution did not at present exist; that Armstrong's warning had referred not to her, but to her daughter; and that Heaven had assigned us to each other: so at least I chose to reason. I did, however, once ask myself the question, "Can this be a temptation of the devil?" But I answered, "No; had he wished to tempt me, he would, in his simple cunning, have made the young and lovely Clara the instrument of his purpose. Against her charms, should I ever be exposed to their attack, I will keep a vigilant watch; but, meantime, let me abandon myself to the enjoyment of an improving as well as a delightful intercourse with this amiable creature."

Thus reflecting, I remained silent for a few moments, and my companion presently asked, in sad but most winning tones, "You are glad you have found me, dear Harry?" I looked into her

lovely face for one instant, and then, folding her to my heart, cried out, "I am your slave till the end of time!"

XV.

As I clasped Isabella (that was her name) in my arms, a slight noise from the rock just above us caused us both to look up. We beheld a tall figure, wrapped from head to foot in a cloak. The appearance of this intruder was threatening. Yet, fortified by the knowledge I had gained from Armstrong, I felt no fear for myself; it was only for my fair companion that I was anxious. I was afraid that, despite the utmost exertions I might make in her defence, she might at any moment be snatched from me,—if not by force, at any rate by some mysterious or supernatural means.

I bade Isabella be under no apprehension. I then called out to him in the cloak, "Who are you; and what do you want?"

A deep voice, which had in it a metallic sound that I thought I recognised, answered: "I am

the shepherd, and I seek for one who has strayed from my flock."

At these words Isabella tightly grasped my hand, and whispered, "Save me ; it is the arch-fiend !" I had myself suspected as much.

Mustering all my courage, I drew my sword, and cried out, "I command you in the name of the Blessed Trinity to leave us !" He did not heed the exorcism, but at once leapt down from the rocks, and stood before me. Then dropping his cloak, he disclosed his appalling features, now knit in a spasm of horrid rage ; and violently stamping on the ground, he shouted, "Who are you that dare to use such words ? Have you not just avowed yourself my slave ? My slave you are, in your heart ever have been, and shall be evermore, by all the souls of the damned !"

This he bellowed in a terrible tone. But I was not unnerved, and I boldly answered him thus : "Impotent old wretch, I scorn and defy you ! I am a Christian ; and by the holy cross, the emblem of my faith, I again command you to depart."

"You are a hypocrite !" he fiercely rejoined,

"and therefore your whining spells have no force."

I then rushed upon him ; but before I could reach him he stepped nimbly back, and picking up a great handful of dust, threw it straight in my face. I was temporarily blinded. I endeavoured, nevertheless, to find Isabella, and kept calling to her to come to my side. I heard her give one scream, I thought close to me ; but immediately afterwards she uttered another cry, which seemed to proceed from under the precipice. My powers of vision, such as they were, then returned, and I saw, with angry consternation, that Isabella was in the enemy's clutch, on a narrow pyramid of rock, which had risen up from below, and from which I was separated by a chasm about thirty feet in breadth. The fiend was smiling ; but, strange to say, his smile was not one of triumph. On the contrary, he was evidently exerting himself to give an amiable and benevolent aspect to his detestable face, for he arched his eyebrows, and curled up his lips, while the skin across the bridge of his hooked nose tightened until the yellow bone underneath

almost protruded. And now, to my astonishment and horror, I saw Isabella prostrate herself before him, and apparently implore his aid. He continued smiling in the repulsive manner I have described, and seemed to answer Isabella by pointing to me, as if to say that I was the obstacle to his granting her request.

I became nearly frantic with rage and despair, and shouted, at the top of my voice, "Do not demean yourself by kneeling to him, dearest. Call to Heaven for assistance, and he will have no power over you."

But she evidently did not hear me, nor could I distinguish some words which I saw she addressed to me. But the evil being presently spoke, and in such clear, though deep tones, that I distinctly heard him.

"This woman," he said, "does not petition on her own behalf, or on yours, but on behalf of one Armstrong, who, for his presumption in telling you certain matters it was not intended you should know, is now lodged in my regions, there to remain at my pleasure."

For a moment I felt disposed to believe this

horrible tale ; but then a voice within me whispered, "He is the father of lies. Be firm." Firm for myself, I knew I could be ; but how was I to save Isabella ? Surely I should require stratagem rather than firmness for that enterprise. I determined, however, to make one more struggle openly to overcome the foe. So having walked to the extreme edge of the precipice, I placed my two hands round my mouth, and called out, "Hear me, for the Lord's sake ! poor Isabella. Ask Heaven to save you, and you will be saved, I promise." But at these words the devil took Isabella by the hand, and, leading her away, began to descend the farther side of the pyramid. I then shouted, "Hold, hold ! I command, I beseech you !"

He turned back, and, looking at me, his face making a solemn attempt to express innocence, said, "Be more reasonable. That you hate me, I know. It is not your fault, for you have been taught so to do. But reflect whether you have not also been taught to fear me."

"To fear you !" I exclaimed. "Never !"

"Have you never, then, read these words,"

said he, "'Fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell'?"

"I have heard those words, 'Old Crafty,'" answered I, "and have learnt to interpret them properly. I have heard, moreover, that you can quote Scripture."

At this the fiend stamped with his foot; and then, suddenly catching Isabella in his arms, threw himself headlong from the height, and he and his burden disappeared in the dark mists beneath. Distraction seized me, and I prepared to throw myself down also. But before I could effect my mad purpose, my senses deserted me, and I fell backwards on the rocky ledge where I had been standing.

XVI.

When I was again able to observe what was passing, and to think, I found myself lying on a couch or bier at the top of several planks and fagots, which were placed together in the manner of a funeral-pile.

With the return of consciousness came the

recollection of the awful events that had lately taken place ; and for the first time since memory had been restored to me, I regretted the possession of that faculty. My heart was torn by the image of Isabella, and I found it difficult to reconcile her dreadful fate with my preconceived idea of the mercy that is infinite. "What dire offence can she have committed?" I asked myself; "and why was she suffered to commit such an offence at all?" But I was now too well enlightened to persist for long in such mundane reasoning. I could not cease deploring Isabella's doom, but I soon subdued the presumption which had disposed me to question the supreme justice, and, after acknowledging, with fitting humility, my ignorance, vanity, and guilt, I felt comforted.

I have said that I was on a kind of bier placed upon something resembling a funeral-pile, and my attention was recalled to my situation by suddenly perceiving that some of the wood forming the pile was burning. At first I felt instinctive alarm ; but after a little reflection, I became confident that the burning funeral-pile was merely a symbol, which it was beyond my power to in-

terpret, and that I could be in no danger from the actual fire. So I sat down on the side of my bier, and quietly watched the progress of the flames.

I was presently startled by a voice close to me, which said, "Hand me up your musket, Dick; this is a rare corner for us three." I then saw standing, on a plank just below me, a man with an ashy-pale countenance, and with only one eye in his head, whom I took to be a British soldier. He was assisting two comrades to climb to the place where he stood; and I saw that, besides their arms, they carried an auger and a hatchet between them. I now observed that my funeral-pile, as I have been calling it, was in fact nothing more than a wooden scaffolding set up by the side of a high brick wall, and apparently constructed for the soldiers to stand upon in order to fire through the wall, which was loopholed. I looked about me, and saw further that the wall enclosed a garden, which had been much trampled down by a number of soldiers who were posted in it. Besides the garden, I noticed a farmyard and several offices, an old tower, and a building that looked like a chapel, all filled with troops. I felt very curious

to know where this place might be, and what was taking place, and I asked one of the three soldiers for information on these points. He was the man who had last climbed up, and his appearance was shocking in the extreme, for, in place of hands, he seemed to have a mere lump of flesh at the end of each wrist, and one side of his body was swollen to at least twice the proper size. He appeared not to hear me when I addressed him, and it was evident that neither he nor his comrades saw me, or knew that I was there at all. Presently the one who was most disfigured said to one of the others, "Corporal, what is the name of this place, did you say?"

The corporal answered "that he would not be sure; but that he had heard the captain call it *Huggimont*."

This made me none the wiser; but I could not mistake the kind of preparations that were being made, and therefore grew impatient for the battle to commence. But I was not destined to see any fighting. Rain began to fall heavily, and my three soldiers took shelter under the platform on which I was standing. I then observed that the

flames which had at first excited my fear came from a large fire which had been kindled below, and round which several soldiers now stood, holding the muzzles of their muskets into the blaze, as if to keep them dry.

But soon the rain came down in such torrents that I could see neither fire nor soldiers, nor any surrounding objects whatever. On every side great sheets of water descended, and everything, except the little space where I stood, seemed to be deluged. Then a vast change took place. The water appeared no longer to fall from the clouds, but only from a range of precipitous mountains by which the scene was encompassed. A rainbow, of extraordinary size and brilliancy, now pierced through the atmosphere, and a second and third arch were soon added. I found that I was standing on a small green knoll, in the midst of a tract of fertile country which was shut in by walls of running water.

As I gazed on the marvellous picture, I suddenly descried a small boat floating just at the foot of one of the gigantic waterfalls. The little craft had a single occupant—a man who some-

what resembled myself, I thought. But before I could fully examine his appearance, he pushed his boat through the water descending from above him, and became hidden behind the sheet. Had I again seen my own spirit? If I had, was not my deliverance close at hand? My mind was thrown into a turmoil of hope and conjecture, and for some time I kept my eyes fixed on the place where the boat had disappeared, trusting that I might have an opportunity of thoroughly scrutinising the apparition. But my attention was presently diverted to an object coming from another quarter. What it was I could not at first distinguish; but gradually one of the rainbows, which it seemed to touch, emblazoned the prow of a small vessel. The vessel drew closer, and I saw that it was like an ancient Roman galley, except that it was without oars. As she proceeded on her way, coming straight towards me, a path of water formed a track for her passage over the land. Her single sail was managed by one old man, whose stooping form and silvered locks I recognised as belonging to my father.

XVII.

I waved my hat, and my father waved his. I shouted to him, and he was soon near enough to hear me, and to answer. At length each of us was able to see the other's face plainly, and it is hard to say which face testified the most joy. When the bark had come close up to me, I sprang on board, greeted my father with profound emotion, and then received his blessing.

"Happy at last, dear father!" I exclaimed.

"And, I trust, for ever," said he.

I asked him whether I should soon see my mother and Alice.

"Most certainly you will," answered he, "and your friend Traveller as well." And as he mentioned the name of my old horse, he gave a peculiar smile.

"Father," said I, presently, "I long to see a great many things, and to ask you a hundred questions; but tell me, in the first place, whether this longing is permissible,—whether it is natural and lawful for me to seek the indulgence of my curiosity."

“You have not been long in discovering,” answered he, “that the conditions of your present happiness are very different to those under which you have been governed on two former occasions. Yes ; your longing to unburden your heart, your thirst for information, are both perfectly natural and lawful. For this, you have passed through many a heavy ordeal. You have been purged, and are now clean and whole ; you have been disciplined, and are now free. You need no longer think of the past with any other feeling than thankfulness ; your present state is absolutely free from care ; and as to what the future still has in store for us, you, and all who are in the same case, may confidently anticipate that we have more to hope for from the supreme mercy than to fear from the supreme justice.”

I will not attempt to describe the feelings with which I heard these words, nor is it possible that any human being would be able to imagine the overflowing joy and gratitude with which my heart was filled. And now, without any hesitation, I related to my father the particulars of my meeting with Isabella, the subsequent interference

of the fiend, and the dark hints the latter had thrown out as to my friend Armstrong's fate.

My father, when he had heard all, said, "Armstrong, of whom I feel rather jealous,"—and he smiled,—“is safe and happy: you will presently see him, and speak with him to your heart's desire. As for Isabella, as you call her——” and he was silent.

“Tell me at once, father,” said I, “that my secret conviction about Isabella is not a mistaken one. Was she not an agent of the devil's, sent to tempt me? And is it not something better than heartlessness which makes me feel, in spite of myself, almost indifferent to her fate?”

“An agent of the devil's,” repeated my father,—“yes, she is his mistress, I believe, and was certainly never destined for yours. But Armstrong can tell you more of this matter.”

Thus the last remnant of care was banished from my thoughts.

Having passed through a narrow opening in the chain of mountains—a means of egress that I had not at first perceived—we began to traverse a vast lake, which was of the colour of turquoise,

and which abounded in great fish of the carp kind. As soon as the mountains behind us had faded out of sight, the melody of birds, which I have already described, gently broke forth. After proceeding for a certain distance, our time passed in familiar, affectionate discourse, we sighted the columns of the ruined temple. Our bark presently entered a little creek, where we lowered our sail, and then landed. I had walked about half-way up the hill on which the temple stood, when my mother and little Alice came down and met me. They both greeted me in the most loving manner; but I observed that my mother presently turned her attentions to her husband. Smiling in his face, she held him by both his hands, and seemed, with playful tenderness, to help him up the hill. I noticed this conduct very particularly, for with my new faculty of recalling all the past, I remembered that my mother in her lifetime had been somewhat given to ruling her lord, and, to say the truth, had often occasioned him sorrow or humiliation by usurping his authority in matters with which she had properly no concern. While my two parents lingered together on the hillside,

little Alice led me up to the summit, and there I once more beheld the diversified glories of the far-stretching plains of plenty. We were soon joined by Rover, who amply testified that he had not forgotten me, and by old Traveller, who seemed to have no recollection of anything disagreeable in connection with his former adventures with me.

Thus was I again made happy ; thus was I munificently overpaid for all that I had undergone in the past.

XVIII.

How many men who talk of "heavenly happiness" know what they themselves mean by the expression? The true nature and extent of heavenly happiness are certainly beyond human knowledge. But when men, and especially divines, speak fluently of the blessings that are in store for true believers in the world to come, are they able to state also whether these blessings shall be after the heart, the worldly heart, of those who are to enjoy them? Do they not

rather secretly harbour the suspicion that that which orthodoxy compels them to call heavenly "*happiness*," is in truth a state which they might more accurately, though less fittingly, describe to the rest of the world as *dulness*? They believe, in short, that to enable them to appreciate the happiness of heaven, their earthly ideas of what happiness is will undergo a miraculous change. There are few persons, indeed, who can unhesitatingly, and with boldness, give a plain answer to the following question: "Do you believe that, in case you are saved, your happiness in heaven will be of the same nature—though in a much higher degree—as the happiness which you lawfully enjoy on earth?" As to these matters, it is certain that modern philosophers know less than any other persons. Children and simple old people probably know most. For my own part, I have only had experience of a state of happiness inferior to that which is to come; but yet I know beyond doubt that, in permitting me to revert to many of the pleasures of my mortal existence, the design has been not to tantalise me with what I am hereafter to lose, but to pre-

pare me for what I am hereafter to enjoy to perfection.

The new conditions of my happiness were, as my father had said, vastly different to those which had regulated my two former sojourns in Paradise. On those past occasions I was allowed to think, speak, and act, only within certain limits, and I was permitted intercourse only with the souls of my three nearest relations. Now, my thoughts, utterances, and actions were all free, and I enjoyed the companionship not only of my own family, but of a host of friends and old acquaintances. Nor did I abuse my new privileges. A base thought never entered my head. I no longer had to keep guard over my tongue, for words of unkindness or folly never rose to my lips. I went where I would; and never, even when Traveller carried me, did I feel any inclination to go in the direction of the distant gulf where I had seen and heard such strange things. I did whatever I listed; and one of my chief pleasures was to accompany my brother Armstrong into the regions of chaos, and there administer relief to some of the unhappy, troubled

spirits whóm we saw there, but by whom we were never seen. In the course of one of these expeditions we met with the soul of an infirm little old woman, who had been soused to death in a pond many years before on a charge of witchcraft. We found her sitting on the shore of the great lake weeping. A bark lay waiting to take her to happiness; but she would not enter it without her only son, who was wandering about she knew not where, for whose salvation she cared more than for her own. We found means to bring him to her, and saw the fond old woman and her son—a labouring man of about sixty—sail joyfully away together. On another occasion we went to the aid of a young man, who was nearly distracted by the perplexities which surrounded him. We contrived to lead him into the company of a learned and worthy man who had once been his tutor; and the latter, on again meeting his pupil, soon reassured him with good counsel.

Some portions of time I passed with my father. He was much engaged in botanical researches, for which he found ample scope; and although I

could not actually help him, the interest which I manifested in his favourite pastime gave him the greatest pleasure. His faithful wife, however, was nearly always at his side, and neither he nor she were ever tired of each other's companionship. My sister Alice had a whole troop of little friends. I often used to see them at play; and the sound of their innocent young voices, constantly raised in laughter, never in strife or infant lamentation, harmonised with the peace and happiness that prevailed everywhere.

The enjoyment of mirth was by no means confined to the children. We all indulged in it to a free extent; and the so-called "wits" of the world would have been astounded could they have seen how much merriment we contrived to create without any of the three aids upon which they ordinarily rely—namely, malice, prurience, and falsehood.

But of the pleasures in which we delighted, I have thus far enumerated only such as all mortals can comprehend. Our chief pleasure was one which most of the world believe to be more a duty than a pleasure. In almost every thought,

word, and deed, we offered our homage and thanksgiving to the source whence all our happiness sprang,—to the Beneficent Disposer of all things, whom we now regarded no longer with mysterious awe, but with a natural and most comforting veneration, like that which the members of one great family might feel for the common patriarch of them all. This pleasure was of such a kind as passes the understanding of most men, and yet it is one that is within the grasp of every human being on earth!

I have already spoken of my brother Armstrong, and of our expeditions into the land of chaos. We generally made these excursions in company; sometimes, however, we went singly, and then it was our great delight afterwards to relate and compare our adventures. Upon one such occasion, Armstrong told me that he had seen a certain Powell, who, after a very brief probation, was now on the point of coming to join us. Armstrong's description of this man greatly excited my curiosity. It appeared that he had quitted the world some time during the latter part of the nineteenth century; and, won-

derful to relate, he was the sole representative of that period in the world's history who had been suffered to escape from even the Region of Detention, the rest being still kept there on account of the perverse wickedness of the times, in atonement for which wickedness, the just, as well as the sinners, were compelled to suffer.

In this account I found the answer to a question which had of late often puzzled us—namely, “How did it arise that, for some time past, we had never seen any who had newly come from the world?” I hoped that I should soon hear a further and more complete explanation of the mystery from Powell himself.

XIX.

Shortly after I had heard of Powell, his expected arrival among us took place. He did not at first come on shore very near to our settlement; but having landed at another part of the coast, he walked along the ridge that was at the water-side until he came to a grove close to the old temple. Directly we heard that he was there, my father,

Armstrong, and I, went to seek him out, and to speak with him. My brother Armstrong had resisted all our importunity that he would tell us what manner of man we were to see. He was determined, he said, playfully, that we should gratify our curiosity with our own eyes. Nevertheless he revealed this much,—that Powell had been a gentleman of good family, and that in his time he had always been a person of consideration; and this information only increased our astonishment when we did behold him to whom it referred.

We found Powell leaning against the trunk of a chestnut-tree. He was apparently deep in meditation, for he did not for some time observe our approach. Thus I had leisure to make a somewhat particular examination of his appearance.

From the rude shape and texture of his garments I should have set him down for a mechanic,—the nature of whose occupation obliged him to wear clothes of a certain coarse kind,—had I not been previously informed as to his real condition. When I had further noticed that his

hands were white and delicately formed, and that his face, of which the profile was turned towards me, expressed refinement and grave thought, I determined that he must be a humorist who chose to affect great singularity.

His head was bare in a threefold sense, for he wore neither hat, wig, nor hair of his own. It is true, however, that something like a little round pan lay on the grass near him, and this may have been his hat. His countenance, though it expressed benignity, was disfigured by a great beard like that of a wild Tartar; but his clothes astonished us more than anything else. He wore nothing but a rough shaggy jacket, and a pair of long very loose breeches that just reached his ankles. The shoes on his feet were not in keeping with his clothes, being evidently worn for ornament rather than for comfort. They were made of a very fine kind of leather, and were bur-nished to an extent with which our art was un-acquainted. They had neither buckles nor shoe-strings, but were fastened together by little but-tons about the size of swan-shot. I had a glimpse of his stockings for one moment, and thought

they were party-coloured like those of a merry-andrew.

This Powell presently looked up and perceived us ; and as he raised his head, I noticed that his neck was almost bare, as though he had it prepared for the executioner. Coming forward, he shook us each by the hand, and smiled very pleasantly as he did so. He then said, in a peculiarly abrupt, informal manner, which was new to our ears, "Don't mind laughing at me ; I like it. I suppose you left the world long before I came into it ; but that won't make any difference to us, I'm sure. I really feel as if I knew you quite well already."

"Mr Powell," answered my father, "you do know us, and we know you : at least," he added, with a smile, "we are furnished on each side with very indisputable letters of introduction."

We then sat down on the grass, and for some time conversed with great enjoyment. We soon perceived that Powell was a man of fine feelings, remarkable intelligence, and strong piety, and yet he continued for some time to puzzle us by a kind of pertness or levity with which he embel-

lished the style of his discourse. But even if it had been possible for us to have felt a little annoyed by this apparent failing of his, we should have been completely disarmed by the course that he adopted. For presently addressing us with evident emotion, he said: "My good friends, I feel that I have a duty to perform. I alone represent that miserable generation which, though it has accomplished nothing but its own corruption and ruin, has chosen to boast its superiority over all preceding ages, in respect both of wisdom and virtue. I wish, then, to take this early opportunity of confessing to you that all this arrogance of ours was almost as unwarranted at the time as it is unjustifiable now. Having made that confession, I feel that I can be happy with you on equal terms, though I am still amazed — almost terrified — by my marvellous, unique destiny."

"You may well be amazed," said my father, "at such signal mercy as you have experienced. For though I do not myself doubt that most of those unhappy beings with whom you once lived will, in course of time, be sent to follow you

hither, yet the present difference between your lot and theirs is altogether most wonderful, and certainly surpasses any instance I have ever known of the inscrutable Power that directs all things."

After a short silence my father again addressed Powell, saying, "You can, if you please, do us a great kindness, my dear Mr Powell." Powell looked inquiringly first at my father, then at each of us; and seeing that we all three smiled, he smiled too, though he still did not know what we expected from him. So my father, as our spokesman, told him that we felt a wholly irresistible desire to hear some account of what had transpired in the world since our quitting it. "And we would especially ask you," said my father, "to trace the causes that have led to that stupendous calamity from which at present only you have been rescued." We were soon listening with absorbed attention to a remarkably clear description of various events that had lately disturbed, excited, astonished, or interested the inhabitants of the earth. But of the history thus unfolded to us—a history most valuable on account of its absolute impartiality—I shall not

attempt to record what was merely chronological, but shall condense certain of Powell's observations on that matter which we thought mainly called for an explanation.

XX.

"As to the influences that have been at work," said Powell, "to involve the punishment of an entire generation—myself excepted—I am of course best qualified to speak of what I have observed for myself in our own country. Moreover, it is certain that had England opposed the stream, instead of joining it, the general inundation would have been at least delayed, if not averted altogether.

"Most historians have their individual crotchets, which at times assist, but which more often embarrass, their sound judgment. Some have a fondness for tracing all the great events of the world to the operation of what they call fixed laws; and these generally manage to confound causes with effects. Others again, and especially those of the modern school, first choose

to represent history as a continuous drama, and then yield to the temptation of connecting personages and incidents, incidents and personages, in a fanciful manner, attractive and gratifying to general readers, but misleading to the simple student, and exasperating to the intelligent one.

“In my own humble capacity before you, I feel strongly tempted to adopt the plan of this second class of historians, and taking the French Revolution of 1793 for my basis, proceed to trace to that one event all the matters which my subject includes. This much I may say without prejudice. The great Revolution in France, and, above all, its comparative success, certainly caused a social revolution in the whole of Europe, and gave, sooner or later, a heavy blow to every kind of established authority. I might add that it sowed the first seeds of that baleful harvest which unhappy mankind is now reaping ; but I prefer laying the case before you in a wider form, leaving you to draw your own conclusions as to whether the misfortunes of the nineteenth century may be directly traced to any particular event gone by, or whether they have arisen from

internal causes which such an event stimulated but did not originate.

"I will now enumerate and discuss the principal misfortunes of the age, dividing them under three heads: the prevailing spirit; the prevailing danger; and the prevailing need.

"The prevailing spirit of the age is Inquiry. Not intelligent, temperate, painstaking inquiry after the truth, and for the truth's own sake, but a rude, unwholesome, greedy craving to immediately denude everything not already exposed to the gaze of the world. Actuated by this spirit of inquiry, which I might have better called the spirit of inquisitiveness, the modern age regards everything, no matter what, with a flippant yet hypercritical curiosity, and feels a blind veneration for absolutely nothing. Men become seized with an inquisitive enthusiasm for certain *results*, and they forthwith determine to achieve those results, not by the old process of honest industry and perseverance, but by certain much less arduous modern expedients of their own.

"The senator who covets high office, emolument, and distinction, pursues those objects by

the shortest path his unscrupulous ingenuity can devise. Smothering his conscience, he begins by setting loyalty and patriotism entirely in the background of his pictured career, and then devotes himself for a time to party. As soon as party ties become inconvenient, he severs them, and gives free play to his personal aims; and presently, having done nothing whatever for the good of the state—having very likely done a great deal to its detriment—he receives prizes originally intended to reward the state's most devoted servants. It is very seldom that this sort of political schemer, when he has thus achieved his great 'result,' openly revels in the unworthiness of the tactics he has employed. Usually speaking, he demeans himself with great gravity and discretion—taking care that his success shall appear in the proper quarter as an encouraging precedent, rather than a warning. Thus I have seen in England notorious demagogues, and even traitors, who have exhibited an inquisitive desire for importance, gratified with posts at the very throne of the sovereign against whom they have been publicly inveighing and secretly conspiring; and

they have received these rather ironical favours with much prudent simplicity and meekness.

"The modern soldier and sailor are less imbued with the spirit of the age than are most other classes of mankind. They are generally rather its victims than its disciples. And yet I have seen, especially in the military service, instances of men reaping honour and distinction, not by their display of professional capacity, but their skilful adoption of certain modern methods, infinitely quicker and more easy, and also infinitely less worthy.

"In the same way, the so-called philosophers, and the students of the present day, prefer to reap the more direct advantages enjoyed by philosophers and students of the past, without all the labour which the latter, in their wisdom, chose to exert. The philosopher finds that Assertion now receives the applause formerly reserved for Proof; and the prospect does not please him of waiting till he is old to confidently prove what he may, while he is still young, with equal success merely assert. The student, like the soldier or sailor, is more sinned against than

were ungrateful and unreasonable, and that it was wholly inexpedient to listen to them. A white skin, however, hides a multitude of sins.

“Again, what should we think of the wisdom of some workers in a mine who, having to their own knowledge dug out all the mineral that the mine could then yield, were to persist in digging on for ever?

“But to leave similitudes and return to facts. The abstract principles which, under past conditions, guided men to salvation, are the same as those which are now luring men to destruction. Religion, justice, and order are hotly assailed, not only by avowed enemies, whose animosity, cupidity, or lawlessness have been inflamed, but by professed friends whose judgments have been misled, either by their own ill-pondered zeal, or by the teachings of crazy prophets.

“Men who have obtained all the liberty that it is at present safe for them to enjoy, still shout their traditional watchword in seeking for licence. Men keenly alive to the advantages they have derived from progress in their arts, their sciences, and their civil and social welfare, now call for

'progress' in opinions which should be immutable; and, not content with having altered or abrogated half the laws of the world, proceed to challenge and impotently question even the laws of heaven.

"It was once a common saying with those who made a stand against some dangerous political measure initiated by the blind disciples of liberty and progress, that 'the thin end of the wedge' was being introduced. That protest is seldom made now, for the wedge has long since been driven home, and it is the bruised and wounded surface left behind that is now being battered."

Here Powell suddenly covered his face with his hands, and became silent. Thinking he might like to be left to his reflections for a little, we moved away from him, and then began to exchange our opinions upon what we had been hearing. But in a few moments he called to us to return, and we once more came and sat down by him, while he resumed his discourse.

XXI.

Powell proceeded as follows :—

“I might say much more as to the chief danger into which men are rushing, of the bad consequences of a general confusion between right and wrong aspirations, and of the harm caused by indiscriminate and unrestrained attempts to turn plausible shadows into useful realities. I would now, however, pass on to another question—namely, how such a state of things as I have tried to depict is suffered to exist. This matter comes under the heading of the third great misfortune—the prevailing need.

“The prevailing need of the age is Discipline. Indiscipline is conspicuous almost everywhere, and the fact is due to three main causes :—

- “1. The timidity of those who are nominally responsible for the maintenance of discipline.
- “2. The slothfulness or folly of those who are capable of upholding, and who are naturally disposed to uphold, the authority of the nominal disciplinarians.

"3. The strength and activity of those whose real or fancied interest it is to oppose the maintenance of discipline.

"If the first of these three causes were removed, the two others would soon cease to exist. But I will briefly discuss each of them in turn.

"In the first place, 'those who are nominally responsible for the maintenance of discipline' have a good deal to urge in excuse for their timidity—the existence of which no one thinks of disputing, though many applaud that weakness as a virtue. Sovereigns who have sworn, according to the written law, to take care of the constitution, are incessantly informed that, according to the unwritten law, it is their duty to let the constitution take care of itself; and if they still show a preference for the written law, they are pretty plainly menaced with extinction.

"Until comparatively recent times, the king governed in fact as well as in theory. His position resembled that of a great landlord, who, having the aid of various standing rules which his ancestors have handed down to him for guidance in the management of his estates, selects trusted

advisers for his further assistance, and then discharges, according to his conscience, the heavy duties of his responsible station. But now the position of the king resembles rather that of an infant inheritor whose extensive property is managed by trustees of whom he knows nothing, who exert themselves professedly in his interest, but actually in their own interest, or with the object of conciliating those by whom they have been appointed.

“The monarch to whom has been intrusted the honour of his country, the happiness of his subjects, and the defence of the national religion, now sees his country’s engagements broken, her threats ridiculed, and her arms defeated; now sees the liberty and comfort of his law-abiding subjects interfered with, and their property forcibly confiscated; now sees the privileges of the national faith first invaded, and then almost effaced. He sees all this, and yet remains silent and inactive, under pressure from advisers not chosen by himself, who require his silence and inaction as the fulfilment of an unwritten law of their own; and

“ ‘ Letting I dare not wait upon I would,’

he passively looks on while the chief props of his throne are being cut away. Sometimes in his heart he cannot but own that he was not called to his exalted state merely to be a puppet alternately in the hands of two contending factions, and that he was certainly designed for loftier duties than those of signing documents and occasionally heading a pageant. But these promptings of his conscience are not strong enough to arm him with the sort of courage he requires. Moreover, by remaining supine, a great deal of personal ease is assured to him ; and furthermore, he is constantly plied with the doctrine that such supineness is really a masterly inactivity, sanctioned by precedent and demanded by expediency.

“ But when monarchs set the example of yielding as if by necessity to an evil which it is in their power to remove, what wonder that loyal subjects should cease to busy themselves in the suppression of that evil? What wonder that those who are blindly loyal to the person of the monarch should regard his submission as a command to them to submit; or that those who

are loyal rather to the principle of monarchy should feel their enthusiasm chilled, and even their faith shaken? Such is certainly the case. Those whom reason, interest, or sentiment formerly disposed to uphold the maintenance of discipline, now uphold it no longer, for they no longer find any encouragement in the task.

“Notwithstanding all this, if the leaders of the people would awake from their dangerous torpor, they could still arouse the remainder with complete success. Who are these leaders? and what special attitudes of slothfulness or folly do they assume? The natural leaders of the people are the aristocracy; but they are no longer the sole leaders. This latter fact is in great measure their own fault; for since they contrived to maintain their ascendancy in past times, when they were to a considerable extent conspicuous for their vices, so much the more should they be able to maintain their ascendancy in the present time, when they are to a very great extent conspicuous for their virtues. But the fact is, it is the fatal excess of one of these virtues—that of moderation—which originally betrayed them. It was an ill-

timed and impolitic 'moderation' which caused them to sit still when the first stealthy encroachment on their power was made; it was a still more ill-timed and impolitic 'moderation' which caused them to remain idle when the rival power which had made the first encroachment proceeded to establish its strength, and to render its position nearly impregnable. What that rival power is, and how formidable it has become, I shall have to show later on.

"The natural leaders of the people, then, are no longer the sole leaders, and the usurpation which their own slothfulness has permitted for the present seems to have paralysed them completely. But besides the aristocracy, there are other forces which might well be engaged in rousing from lethargy and indifference the well-disposed bulk of the people. I will take one of these forces—the Church. It never was my wish to see the Church, forgetful of her true functions, throw herself, whether on one side or the other, into political strife; but it always was my desire to see the Church, mindful of her true functions, unhesitatingly lend her aid to that cause for the benefit of

which she was instituted—the cause of faith and morality. The Church is built on a rock, and, properly defended from within, may withstand all assaults from without. But she is not properly defended from within. For those who should be straining every nerve in her defence are, instead, expending their strength and energy upon internecine struggles, by which alone the walls of the venerable structure are being torn down—torn down so steadily and so obviously, that an ominous lull has come in the attacks of the enemies without. Indiscipline amongst the clergy is chiefly the cause of these internecine struggles; indiscipline in the whole community is partly their result. For the good that the clergy do by their wise and Christian precepts is far outweighed by the harm that they cause by their unwise and unchristian example.

“Lastly, I turn to some further consideration of that new rival power which now shares the authority of the natural leaders of the people, and which indeed bids fair to entirely usurp their authority, and all other authority besides.

“That power is no other than the newspaper

press. In your day, gentlemen, the limited appliances for printing, the slow modes of communication, the heavy stamp duties, the high rates of postage, and, above all, the rather primitive condition of education, restricted the number of newspapers to a very small total. But now, all those causes having disappeared, the case is vastly different; and I am sure that, in London alone, there are now twenty times as many newspapers as the whole of the United Kingdom possessed in your day. 250,000 copies of one paper are sold every day! 180,000 of another, 170,000 of a third, 100,000 of a fourth! What gigantic demand is it that regulates such a gigantic supply? It is the demand of masses of men belonging to the middle and lower classes, who, infected with the spirit of the age, wish to know everything that is going on in the world, and to give 'opinions' on all that is passing, with the least possible trouble to themselves; and the consequence, shortly stated, is, that neither the middle nor the lower classes any longer think for themselves. They delude themselves into the belief that they are thinking for themselves;

but the truth is, they learn opinions just as they learn lessons in their professions or crafts—opinions coming from men who are paid to teach those opinions, but who are originally no better qualified to lay down the law than are those whom they instruct. ‘Public opinion’ is still quoted with mock reverence by the highest in the land ; but the highest in the land know only too well that ‘public opinion’ and newspaper opinion are one and the same thing.

“Now you may naturally observe, ‘This “public opinion,” or “newspaper opinion,” whichever it may be, must surely be divided. It cannot all be on the same side,—the side which, according to your views, is adverse to the “maintenance of discipline.”’ That is true; and the friends of discipline have certainly taken to the same unfair weapon as their opponents, but the latter have an enormous superiority in numbers, and the unfair weapon lends itself much more readily for the purpose of attack by the many, than for the purpose of defence by the few.

“Moreover, constant stimulations to knock

things down, always appeal to the fancies of the masses more powerfully than repeated exhortations to leave things standing.

“To sum up the whole matter: the calamity which has befallen a whole age is due to the sins and follies of that age. There are remedies for all the ills that I have attempted slightly to describe. Some of those remedies I have pointed out, others your own intelligence will suggest. It may be, however, that the time for remedies has gone by, and that the second fall of man portends the speedy end of all things. I have sometimes felt convinced that such was the case; and it is strange, the conviction seizes me more forcibly at this moment than it has ever done before.”

Here Powell abruptly broke off his discourse, and then exclaimed, “Look! see! who can these three people be?” He was evidently much agitated; and my father, Armstrong, and I, impressed by his manner, eagerly looked in a certain direction to which he pointed.

XXII.

Powell pointed to a little wooded dell, some half-mile distant, and soon we saw a group of three persons emerge from the covert, and then commence ascending straight towards the spot which we occupied. Of these three persons, one, so far as we could judge, seemed to be a man very much of the same mould as Powell—that is, he was tall, and rather well formed—yet wore the rough, shapeless costume of the latest times, and had his face hidden away in a beard of extravagant size. The two persons who accompanied him were each of them of very low stature, but at the same time stout, and surprisingly active. We were especially struck by their activity, because they were clothed from head to foot in thick furs and skins, but, nevertheless, contrived to keep pace with their taller and less heavily accoutred companion.

When the three had approached quite close to us, we perceived in their looks certain signs which astonished us to the last degree. We were in the habit of seeing, in the faces of those around

us, no other expression but that of calm happiness. Now we beheld, in the countenance of the man resembling Powell, grave care ; in the faces of the two persons in fur, fear and perplexity. With one impulse we sprang to our feet, ran forward, and met these arrivals. But they went straight up to Powell, and first the tallest of the party embraced him ; then the two others, apparently under the direction of the first, made gestures which were plainly indicative of submission and respect.

My father now observed to me in a low tone, " We shall hear all in good time. At present Powell is astonished that it should have proved, as I expected, that he is not the only one who has been saved from the great catastrophe."

Armstrong here came near us and said, " What can be the meaning of those anxious, sorrowful looks ? I little thought I should again see anxiety or grief depicted in the face of man. Can it be—— ? "

At this moment Powell turned towards us and said, " My friends, it is necessary for us to summon all the trust and confidence, and also all the

fortitude, of which we are capable. This German, between whom and myself there exists a mysterious bond, has just been released from the Region of Chaos ; and he brings from thence the most serious tidings that could possibly be conceived. The final judgment is at hand, and all the souls of the departed are being marshalled together in readiness."

Speechless and motionless with awe, we now listened to the German, whose words we all alike comprehended, though I believe he was speaking in his own language, which none of us had ever learnt. "It is most true," said he ; "when I left the opposite shores of the great lake, those shores were crowded with a numberless concourse of beings, who stood in endless ranks awaiting their inevitable and soon - to - be - accomplished fate. None were permitted to depart excepting only these two Laplanders and myself. But to us here the great arraignment is at hand, though in a manner most mercifully different from that in store for those whom I have lately left behind."

My father now cried out, in deep distress, "My beloved Lucy, where art thou ?"

"I am here," a gentle voice answered; and his wife, with my sister Alice at her side, stood before him for an instant, and then threw herself into his arms. At the same time, Edith Armstrong was clasped to her husband's breast.

The two Laplanders, who, though they appeared to belong to the same sex, were actually mother and son, had meanwhile prostrated themselves on the ground. All the rest of us sank upon our knees.

Finding it impossible to devote my thoughts to prayer, I abandoned myself to the awful speculations which absorbed my mind—speculations as to how, in what actual manner, the end was to come. Should I be caught up into the clouds? would the ground open and swallow me? or should I be wafted away to those regions beyond the gulf which I had once sought to cross? As this last thought occurred to me, I fixed my gaze in the direction where the gulf lay. I beheld, almost immediately, a sight to which I had long ago become accustomed, but which, on this most momentous occasion, had a very unusual interest and significance. We were in the habit of seeing

a host of winged beings soar upwards from where the gulf was, and then disappear in the clouds. We used to see this at certain regular intervals, which were to us the only divisions of time that we had. Such a winged host ascended now, and with rapt attention I watched and waited. The host having flown a little distance towards the clouds, suddenly opened out into a long line, and began to advance towards us. Upon this, some of our number gave vent to suppressed exclamations of wonder or expectancy; but the two Laplanders, incongruous as it may appear, laughed outright with satisfaction.

The host continued to draw nearer and nearer; but we perceived that many of the winged beings descended to the various temples which lay scattered over the plains, and which, as we knew, were inhabited by other little colonies similar to our own.

At length, out of the myriad which had originally ascended into the sky, only some twenty remained. Six of these began to descend directly to us, the rest passing on, I suppose, to two other places situated further down the coast. At first

I did not dare to look up, but I was aware that the celestial six now stood amongst us. One passed by me, leading little Alice, my sister, by the hand. Another came to the side of Powell, who was close to me, and began to speak to him. While he was thus speaking, I ventured to glance once at his face, and for a moment I thought it was the face of Powell himself. But Powell himself was kneeling and in meek silence, and he who was addressing him bore a different and infinitely nobler aspect, except that his face certainly had the resemblance I had noticed. I plainly heard the words he uttered, which were these: "The last and greatest of all your trials is now near at hand. In the meantime, confide in the mercy which has hitherto been so signally manifested to you, and bear in mind that when you deliberately abandoned the schemes of worldly advancement which you had formed, and, selling your vast possessions, in secret gave everything to the poor, your conduct was recorded faithfully, and in imperishable letters."

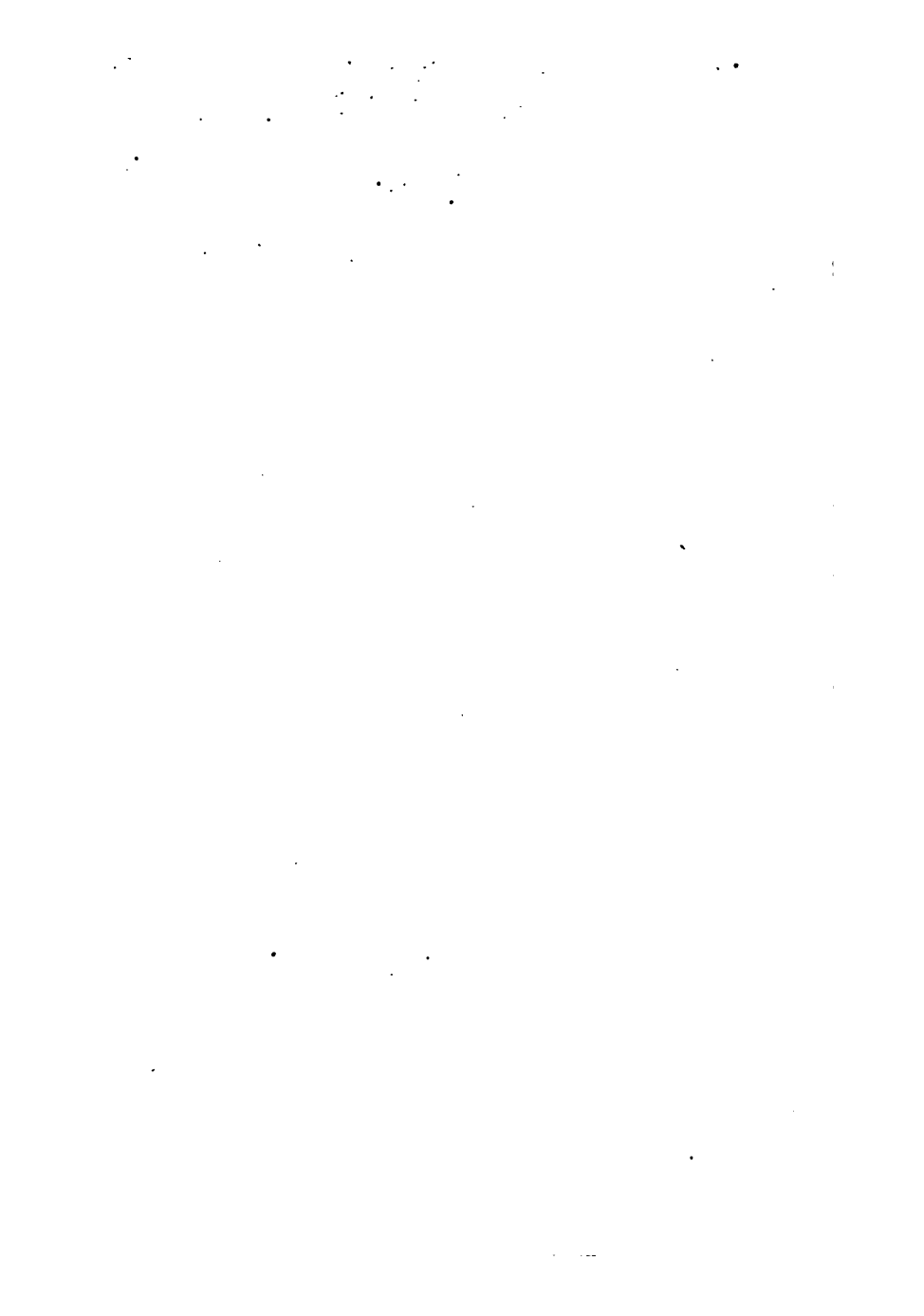
And now my shoulder was touched, a winged being stood over me, and these words were spoken

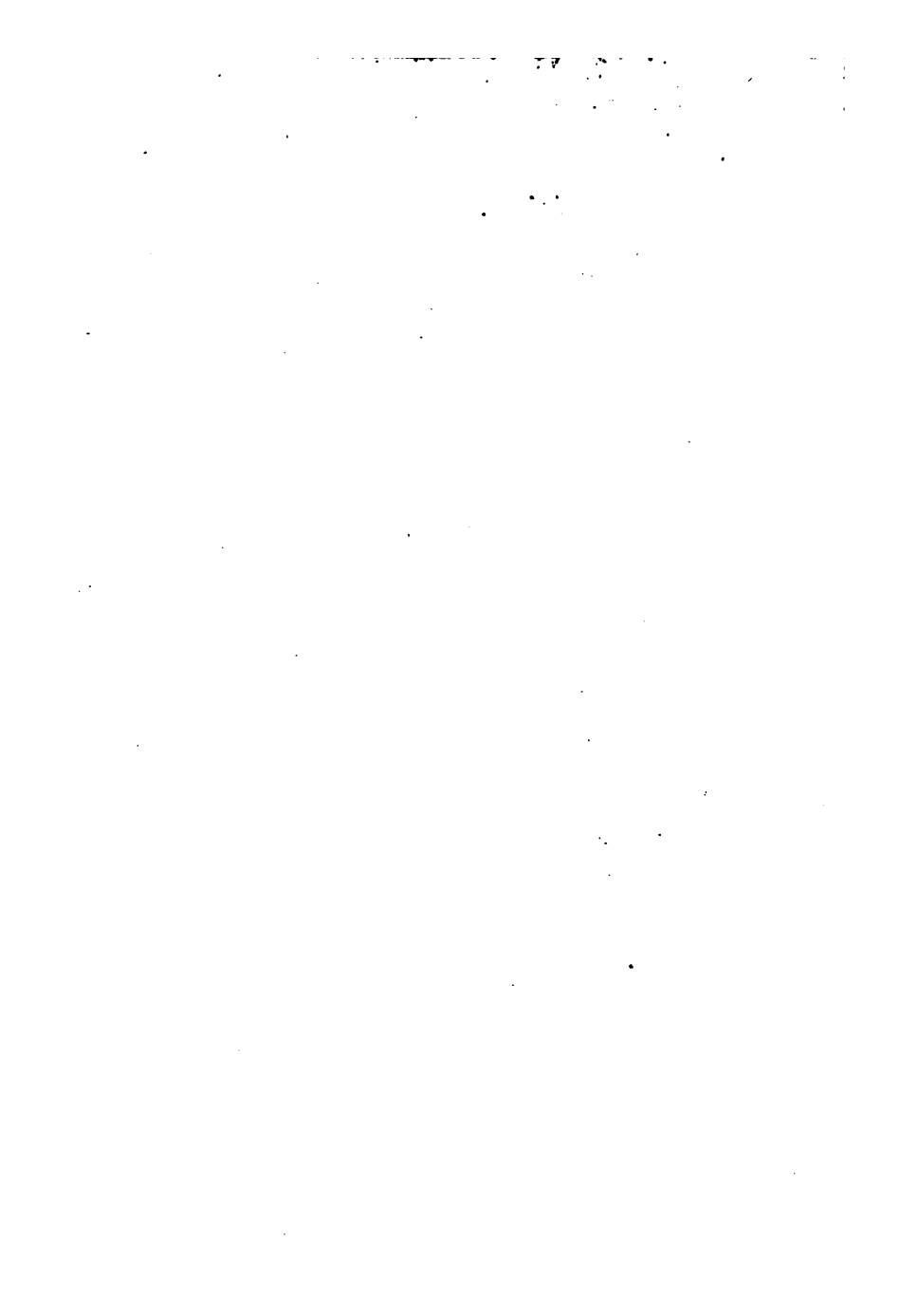
in kind tones which seemed familiar to me :
“Henry Coke, the end of all things is approaching. Here it will at once be accomplished ; in the world, for a brief space, its coming must still be delayed. To that world which you once loved so well you must now return ; but do not despair. Unseen by mankind, you will have certain tasks to perform for mankind’s benefit. Perform those tasks well, and the prize which you are at present unworthy to receive will yet be yours.”

The voice ceased speaking. I attempted to murmur something in the nature of response or reply, but profound awe and a conflict of many emotions made me silent. I then heard my father, Armstrong, and Powell shouting my name, and beseeching me to answer them. But I had fallen into a sort of stupor, and could neither move nor utter a sound. Presently their voices seemed to come from a great distance, and the last words I heard, spoken by Armstrong, came to me like a faint echo : “Harry ! Harry Coke ! oh touch me with your hand, and tell me that my soul has indeed returned to its habitation !”

Then the spell that bound me was broken, and I looked up.

Where I was, where I now am, I could tell, but may not, and how I have been enabled to make these communications I dare not reveal.





POPULAR WORKS OF FICTION.

Each complete in One Volume, Crown 8vo, bound in cloth.

- Adam Bede.** By GEORGE ELIOT. Illustrated, 3s. 6d.
The Mill on the Floss. By GEORGE ELIOT. Illustrated, 3s. 6d.
Silas Marner. By GEORGE ELIOT. Illustrated, 2s. 6d.
Scenes of Clerical Life. By GEORGE ELIOT. Illustrated, 3s.
Felix Holt. By GEORGE ELIOT. Illustrated, 3s. 6d.
Romola. By GEORGE ELIOT. With Frontispiece, 3s. 6d.
Middlemarch. By GEORGE ELIOT. With Frontispiece, 7s. 6d.
Daniel Deronda. By GEORGE ELIOT. With Frontispiece, 7s. 6d.
Troublesome Daughters. By L. B. WOLFORD. Third Edition, 6s.
Cousins. By L. B. WOLFORD. Fourth Edition, 6s.
Pauline. By L. B. WOLFORD. Fifth Edition, 6s.
Mr Smith: A Part of his Life. By L. B. WOLFORD. Cheap Edition, 3s. 6d.
Ten Thousand A-Year. By SAMUEL WARREN. Illustrated, 5s.
Diary of a Late Physician. By SAMUEL WARREN. 3s. 6d.
Linda Tressel. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE. Cheap Edition, 3s. 6d.
Nina Balatka. By ANTHONY TROLLOPE. Cheap Edition, 3s. 6d.
Doubles and Quits. By Lieutenant-Colonel L. W. M. LOCKHART. New Edition. Illustrated, 6s.
Fair to See. By the SAME. Seventh Edition, 6s.
Mine is Thine. A Novel. By the SAME. Sixth Edition, 6s.
The Maid of Sker. By R. D. BLACKMORE. Eighth Edition, 7s. 6d.
Tom Cringle's Log. By MICHAEL SCOTT. New Edition. Illustrated, 5s. Cheap Edition, 2s. 6d.
The Cruise of the Midge. By MICHAEL SCOTT. 2s. 6d.
The Story of Valentine; and his Brother. By Mrs OLIPHANT. 5s.
Katie Stewart. By Mrs OLIPHANT. Boards, 2s. 6d.
John: A Love Story. By Mrs OLIPHANT. 2s. 6d.
Reata: What's in a Name? By E. D. GERARD. New Edition, 6s.
Marmorne. The Story is told by Adolphus Segrave, the Youngest of Three Brothers. Third Edition, 6s.
John-a-Dreams. A Tale. By JULIAN STURGIS. 3s. 6d.
Guilty, or Not Guilty. A Tale. By Major-General W. G. HAMLEY. Cheap Edition, 3s. 6d.

Tales from 'Blackwood.' New Series. In 24 Shilling Parts, each complete in itself; or bound in 12 Volumes, cloth, 30s.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD & SONS, EDINBURGH AND LONDON.







